

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 6, 2023, ASHAR 22, 1430 BS

A PUBLICATION OF *The Daily Star*



HOMESICKNESS ISN'T JUST MISSING HOME

PG 3

HOW TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION IF YOU'RE A VICTIM OF HARASSMENT

PG 8



HOW STUDENT POLITICS IMPACTS THE LIVES OF STUDENTS

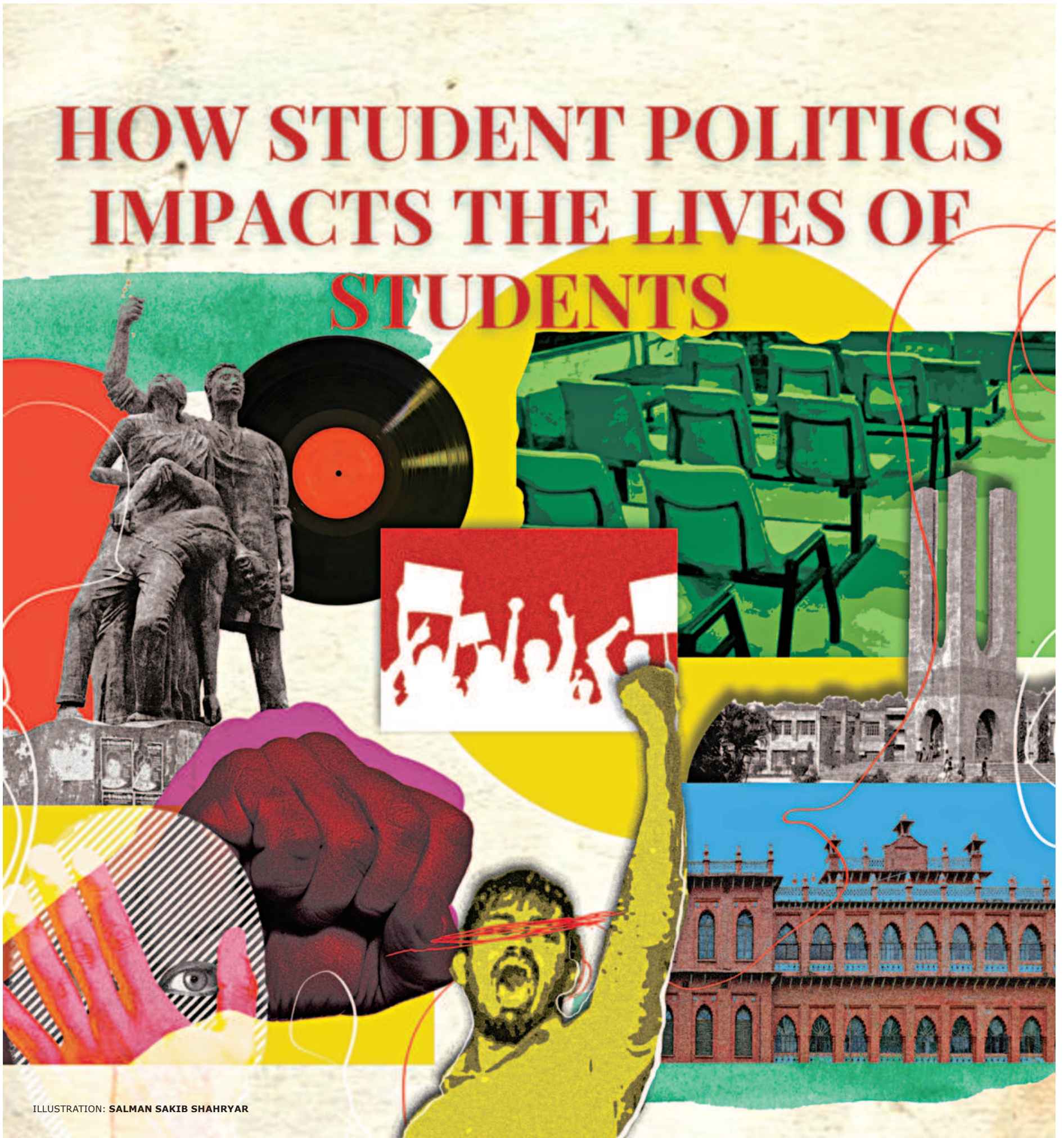


ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

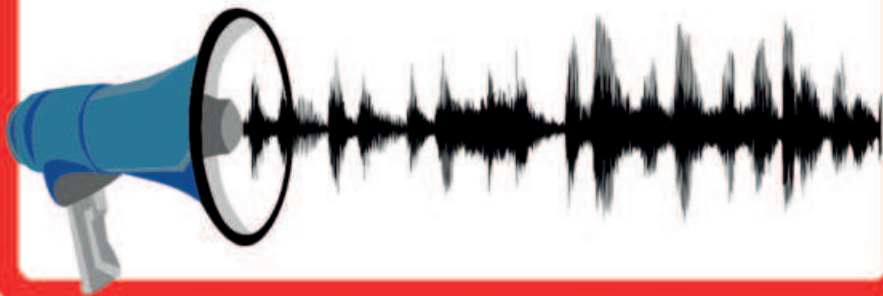
EDITORIAL

Living a very sheltered life as a child, I operated with the assumption that politics is a faraway, abstract concept that did not have a direct impact on my life. Of course, the assumption came from a very self-centred and privileged viewpoint. As the years went on, the undeniable intricacy of politics in virtually every facet of life, in general and also my own, became glaring.

However, as much as it shames me to admit, I still end up taking a backseat when it comes to things that matter, with politics being only one example. I have grown accustomed to viewing life as a collection of concepts and abstractions, which has been quite detrimental in the long run. This feeling probably wouldn't persist or even manifest under different circumstances, but it's very difficult to shake off in the present scenario.

Even if the awareness is there, the action isn't. It's definitely easier said than done, but from this point on, I should try to finally convert awareness into action.

— Fatima Jahan Ena, Sub-editor, SHOUT



Dear readers,
 We have an announcement to make. The upcoming issue of SHOUT, on July 13, will mark the 10th anniversary of our beloved youth magazine. It will also be the last ever issue of SHOUT.

For ten years, SHOUT has attempted to capture, within its pages, the wide variety of moods and tastes among the youth of Bangladesh. It has been a difficult job, one that required us to be fast on our feet. It was a riveting journey, and it now seems that we are at the end of this road.

This road does not lead to a dead end, however. The platform that SHOUT provided to the young and the opinionated in our society has been a unique feature of The Daily Star, and as a continuation of that, two

youth publications will be added to The Daily Star's catalogue.

From July 20 onwards, The Daily Star on Thursdays will include "Campus", a weekly publication for the driven and ambitious young people of Bangladesh. On the last Thursday of every month, The Daily Star will bring "Rising Stars", a separate monthly publication focused on the youngest readers among us, capturing their interests, passions, and dreams.

Next week, however, we celebrate what SHOUT has been able to achieve for these last ten years. Be sure to collect your copy of The Daily Star on Thursday, July 13, and join us in bidding farewell to the definitive youth magazine. Sincerely,

The SHOUT team

P.S. Send us any thoughts, messages, and comments you may have about SHOUT to shoutds@gmail.com. For this last week, there are no word limits!

PLAYWATCH

MOVIES



SURONGO

Nisho's perfect debut venture

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

During *Surongo's* promotion, Afran Nisho mentioned how he always wants to be part of good scripts, no matter the scale. While his entire fanbase kept wondering why Nisho took this long to be launched on the big screen, *Surongo* is the perfect response to their curiosity.

Director Raihan Rafi draws inspiration from the real-life incident of 2014 when someone broke into the vault of Sonali Bank in Kishoreganj by digging a tunnel. However, that's the only similarity the plot has to the incident.

The story revolves around Masud, played by Afran Nisho, and his love for his wife, Moyna, played by Toma Mirza. After marriage, Masud has a hard time satisfying his wife's unquenchable greed. While Masud goes abroad to earn more for his wife in Bangladesh, Moyna flees with Masud's friend Zahir, played by Mostafa Monwar. When Masud returns to Bangladesh, he eventually confronts his wife and realises Moyna left him because he didn't earn enough to fulfil all her demands. Moyna's greed leads Masud to dig a tunnel to break into the bank's vault and eventually win Moyna back.

The screenplay takes its time in the first half in building up the prime incentive for the protagonist. While a bit slow before the interval, it helps you sympathise with Masud later on and the viewers are rewarded for their patience as the screenplay picks up fast in the second half.

Shahiduzzaman Selim, in his role as the police officer in charge of catching Masud, was extremely enjoyable despite his limited screen time. His Chatgaiya accent, screen presence, and dialogues made the entire theatre liven up every time he came on the screen.

Surongo stands out in its cinematog-

raphy, colour grading, and set design. After *Hawa* a few months back, *Surongo* is yet another visual treat for the local film audience. The efforts of the crew and the pre-production planning were evident throughout the film.

Although the screenplay takes the story to another level, it's the performances that sealed the deal for me. Afran Nisho as Masud is expectedly excellent, especially in scenes where he gets to portray his raw emotions and outrage. The gradual evolution of Masud from desperation to obsession and finally to mania was captured brilliantly by the maestro that is Nisho. However, Toma Mirza was very convincing in her role as she made the audience truly loathe her character. It wasn't Moyna, but rather her greed that was portrayed as the antagonist and even then, Rafi somehow managed to put layers into Moyna's character as well.

However, *Surongo* has its weaknesses. The background score, especially in the first half, sounded very predictable as every human emotion was backed by a score. The film lacked its share of silence which is crucial in sound design. The songs, albeit beautiful, were extremely loud to the point that the dialogues were inaudible. An item song was used to cater to the masses but felt unnecessary. Some of the edits throughout the film felt choppy.

But the audience is bound to forget these tiny shortcomings owing to the climax and Nisho's presence on the big screen. A runtime of almost two and a half hours might sound long but the jam-packed screenplay with multiple layers to the story makes it the debut Nisho deserved.

Remind Ifti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com

When we think about what it means to be homesick, we think it means missing home – missing the comfort of your own bed, waking up to a filling breakfast, and spending time with your friends after classes or work. Yes, all that is true. But sometimes, you don't miss much of home and instead, you hate the conditions of your new abode which makes you feel homesick.



ILLUSTRATION: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

Homesickness isn't just missing HOME

PUJA SARKAR

It's only been a few weeks since I came to the United States for my master's. Let me tell you, I hate it here.

I love the freedom, I love that no one's constantly banging on my door, and that I'm left to my own devices. I don't miss home but there are certain things I hate about my current accommodations that make me miserable at the end of my day.

For one, I really do hate how it's always cold and raining here, even though it's summer. Don't get me wrong, I love winter but it's supposed to be summer. Summer in Bangladesh is about sweat, restlessness, and heat. I don't mean to romanticise this incredible and unbearable heat, but that's the summer I'm used to. Every time I find the smallest patch of sunshine, I find myself going into full plant mode and undergoing photosynthesis for as long as I can. I don't think I've ever hated the cold so much.

Then comes the food. I never really liked the food back home nor was I ever into street food. I like to think my food requirements weren't high maintenance – I have a low spice tolerance, I'm sensitive to texture, I despise sugary tastes but have a sweet tooth, one sip of milk and my mouth is covered in canker sores, and most importantly, I'm vegetarian but I don't like fruits and only prefer cruciferous vegetable. So yes, very not-high-maintenance.

Here, everything tastes the same – fresh and bland. The only condiment or spice prevalent in any food or snack is corn syrup or sugar. Either that or the food colouring is insane. To further allude to how this country simply pretends to be healthy is how the first ingredient listed for gummy vitamins is glucose and sugar. So, make of that what you will.

Lastly, I hate the small talk. Back home, every interaction felt personal. Maybe this is a cultural thing but every interaction I've had here with locals seems a tad superficial. Every conversation I've been a part of outside my classes revolved around the coursework or something about the Hudson Bridge. Even if the conversation topics feel shallow and surface-level, it's not. Everyone genuinely seems like they want to socialise after classes and engage in fun conversations. Maybe the group I'm talking about isn't compatible, maybe it'll take more time or maybe, I just don't fit in.

Aside from everything I hate here that makes me miss home, I do miss some things about Bangladesh – my friends, the coffee, the conversations, and my bedroom walls that absorbed my overthinking out loud. It's not easy being homesick and not entirely knowing how to overcome it, and yet, it's something you have to push through.

Puja does nothing but read Gaiman and drinks unhealthy amounts of coffee. Send her cat photos at fb.com/pspspspspspspspspspsuwu/

No safe space FOR GIRLS

AMRIN TASNIM RAFA

Once out of the many times my mother went about demeaning my girlhood, I allowed my quivering young soul to protest. Her response, instead of belittling my hurt as she had perhaps intended to, revealed a deep-seated wound in solidarity with mine.

"You find this hurtful? Do you know what your grandmother used to say to your aunts and me when we were just children?"

She shared, how after getting caught while stealing a few coins to buy *hawai mithai*, a lengthy beating was accompanied by remarks on how today she steals from her parents, and tomorrow, she'll steal from her husband.

To my grandmother, it was the only natural thing to say. It shaped my mother's view of the world and herself. It led to her attempt at perpetuating this as the norm to me.

What greases the wheels on this vicious cycle? My guess is that, after navigating the world outside of the home as the second sex, our humanity humiliated, having to overcompensate to maintain the same positions and run an extra mile to prove the same levels of competence, we come home to find no escape. There is no mercy anywhere, no space that is safe.

Maybe, internalising and accepting it is the only way out of the torment of fighting an idea that everyone seems to agree with, but feels wrong only to you.

It starts early, from disciplinary scolding used as a tool to ingrain internalised misogyny into our tender young souls, to facing victim blaming when you're too young to understand the vile accusation. The conclusion that authority over our bodies is held by anyone but ourselves follows closely.



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

When we are young, our parents are the most knowledgeable people on the planet. If we had witnessed the use of their infinite knowledge at work to belittle and tear apart women who had dared to ever prioritise their personal goals, happiness, and well-being, is it too unlikely for us to sell our whole lives short to the patriarchy?

If there is any mercy in this world, we can still run home to the loving embrace of our family for reassurance when outsiders reduce us to our appearance, and then insult its supposed flaws. But what on earth are we to do if these "flaws" had already been picked apart at home and left bare for vultures to pick apart?

A girl raised in a household where her brother's education was prioritised over her own, where her wings were clipped before she could take flight is less inclined to object to hiring discrimination against women for qualified positions. She is less inclined to believe that she is capable and deserving, and more inclined to allow her intellect and labour to be exploited her whole life.

If misogyny is deep-seated in the way we discipline our children, we leave our women with nowhere to turn to. We do them the atrocious injustice of making them believe in the righteousness of perpetrators. We make their lives a living hell, with no voice and no human rights.

Amrin's ceaseless confusion is really getting in the way of her happiness. Email home remedies to amrinrafa@gmail.com



PHOTOS: STAR

How STUDENT POLITICS impacts the lives of students

AZRA HUMAYRA AND HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

On October 6, 2019, the whole country was shaken to its core by the murder of Abrar Fahad, a second-year student at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) at the hands of members of Bangladesh Chhatra League's (BCL) BUET wing and their followers. BCL, of course, condemned the incident and expelled the members involved. BUET has since banned student politics on their premises.

Yet, Abrar wasn't the first casualty of student politics in recent years. Just in BUET, in 2002, Sabekun Nahar Sony, a student of Chemical Engineering fell prey to the gunfire between two groups of BUET Chhatra Dal. In 2013, Arif Raihan Dwip, an undergraduate student of Mechanical Engineering was brutally hacked to death by a religious extremist. But that begs the question – in a country that owes its independence to its glorious history of student politics, is banning it the only feasible solution to circumvent its negative repercussions?

In many public universities, not being a part of student politics is often not an option. Hall seat allocations and other privileges are often available only for students taking part in student politics.

"When I first started living in the *gonoroom* (public room), I stayed there for two and a half months. Then the pandemic started and I left. When the seats were allotted politically, I didn't find my name on the list because I didn't participate in the programmes or guestroom activities and didn't lobby well with the big brothers," said Abir Ayon, a resident of Bijoy Ekattor Hall of Dhaka University. "I did end up getting a legal department seat in the Bijoy Ekattor Hall after a year. I just want merit-based seat allotment and it should be monitored by the university administration. After that, if students want to do politics, it should be up to them."

"I was ousted from my legal room and the students who occupied the room didn't come out even when the house tutors asked them to," said Arafat Rahman*, a resident of Haji Muhammad Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University. "Halls are indeed run by the student political leaders and not by the administrations. Despite the political leaning, the student political groups should represent the students first and foremost. But often enough, they're seen abusing their powers to fulfil their own agenda."

Attending political programmes and rallies are often not optional for the students. Residents are forced to join these programmes to save their hall allocations and be on the good books of the ones in charge.

"Students are often forced to take part in the programmes even when they have classes. Sometimes they

call for mandatory participation before the midterms. Of course, if someone wants to participate, they can but making it mandatory puts pressure on the students who want seats in the halls," said Tanjila Tasnim, a resident of Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall of Dhaka University.

"The seat allocations provided by the college authority are redistributed within a few months by the political groups in charge," said Tashfiq Rustom*, a resident of Shaheed Dr. Fazle Rabbi Hall of Dhaka Medical College. "So, if you aren't a member of these political groups, getting decent hall seats isn't possible. But there's another side to it. After the internship, if someone wants to get posted in Dhaka for a training post, political lobbying is needed. So, getting into politics is needed sooner or later in the medical career in most cases."

Students not a part of these political factions often have to live in unbearable conditions in the *gonoroom* with 30-35 other students on the floor, a room that can usually only accommodate eight. Perhaps the most severe cases of abuse occur in what is called the

"guestroom culture", where junior students are "educated" by their senior hallmates on the rules one has to abide by to stay in the halls.

In most cases, these rules are implemented by the ones with political influence.

"The guestroom culture is a process through which students in the *gonoroom* are disciplined," said Mahfuz Rahman*, a resident of Sir A F Rahman Hall of Dhaka University. "If you see your senior, you should raise your hand in greeting and say your name. But the hand cannot be held tightly or shaken. Besides, saying *salam* is prohibited in many places including canteens, washrooms, newspaper rooms, reading rooms, etc. as per the rules. If the first-year students miss the *salam*, they'd have to account for it later at night in the form of various punishments. In addition to verbal abuse, allegations of slapping have also been made several times. Second-year students forbid the freshers to eat in their hall canteens as well."

Ragging and bullying by corrupt political personnel are often overlooked by the university authority. The entire system, starting from hall administration to



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living on campus, is influenced by the political parties at every step. While some students are forced to join these political parties, others often become a part of these parties to get a taste of the power that comes with it.

"The sexual harassment cell is filled with faculty members often resorting to victim blaming when it comes to complains against ones with political affiliations," said Adrita Kabir, a student at the Department of Anthropology of Jahangirnagar University. "Starting from filing a complaint to getting a verdict, the entire process is extremely tedious and exhausting. Ragging is treated much differently when they're caused by the ones with political affiliations. The *gonoroom* and guestroom culture is prevalent to this day."

The collision between different political groups or different factions of the same political group also disrupts the environment of the university, which has been a recurring event in public universities.

"There are 11 political groups for 11 bogies. Peace is never an option when there are 11 groups hence, they fight among themselves constantly," said Anannya Masrur*, a resident of Deshnetri Begum Khaleda Zia Hall of Chittagong University. "Sometimes the students, after an incident, cut the pipes of the shuttle train so that the connection between the city and the campus is severed. People from the city can't visit us nor can we go to them. The only way we can visit the city then is by local buses which is a hassle. The students who are not part of these groups shouldn't have

to suffer for the actions of these political groups."

However, it's not all bad. While the power dynamics within universities often lead to savoury incidences, political organisations do take steps to assist students on campus by providing services.

"In the present context, we only see student politics being presented negatively in the media. But we engage in many student-friendly activities as well," said Badhan Dev, Deputy Secretary of BCL of Jagannath Hall branch of Dhaka University. "In the admission test this year, many active groups tried to help the students with the resources they had. I know of a person who did not know that he had to draw figures in the Cha-unit test so naturally, he didn't bring any pencils, boards, erasers etc. and so we managed to take him to Science Lab and buy him the necessary equipment. Student politics has a role in maintaining quality meal supplies as well. The true spirit of student politics lies in ensuring the rights of the students."

Student-friendly is something we believe has more meaning in survival as a human being than going further in this country, if it was any country where all the necessary amenities of life (freedom of housing, food, healthcare, education and speech) were present it would have been "student-friendly".

"We are, at this point in time, working for student freedom," explained Adnan Aziz Chowdhury, General Secretary of Bangladesh Students Union, Dhaka University. "We have actively continued to demand the repeal of DSA and resist DPA. We have held movements on this and even offline classes. We have also held protests against the privatisation of education and towards not adding VAT to education."

Regardless of the weight and balance of positives and negatives of student politics on campus, politically inclined student bodies are often the key negotiators with the authority and the only credible student body representative in fixing issues around the campus. While it's easy to colour them all in the same shade and ask for outright bans on student politics, the university authorities need to identify the problems created by these groups and how the general student suffers because of a handful of miscreants. Only then can the same spirit of student politics that earned us our independence sustain in taking our country to the next stage.

*Names have been changed upon request

Azra Humayra is a Journalism major and loves French New Wave films. Send her e-mails at: azrahumayra123@gmail.com

Remind Ifiti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

HUMOUR

The art of voicing opinions nobody asked for

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

Humans are opinionated beings. When presented with any situation, most of us will form an opinion. The tragedy of the world however, is that sometimes our opinions are unnecessary – may be even unwelcome. That doesn't hinder us from having our own viewpoints though.

Sure, you can always visit the group chat and rant to your three friends, but being cooped up in that echo chamber would mean missing out on the Socratic euphoria of educating strangers on the street. If you're faced with this dilemma often, then fear not, we have devised a foolproof way you can share your unsolicited input with the world without any holdups.

Rid yourself of self-awareness

Are you perhaps judging someone for being guilty of something you yourself have done in the past? Do you hold double standards about the situation? Throw it all away, it will only slow you down.

Did that one person on your Facebook post a review of a film they've recently enjoyed, which, according to your personal taste, is puerile and overrated? You are a hundred percent entitled to talk down to them. So what if you're just an average joe? You've watched *Pulp Fiction* and *Fight Club* about twenty times now. Certainly you have a sophisticated, obscure taste in films compared to that loser watching superhero movies.

Buzzwords

Maybe you're not the type that can express themselves persuasively. That's normal. The majority of us face the same issue. Now, to tackle this situation, you can try expanding your vocabulary. That process will take you a while, so here's a quick shortcut to being more convincing in defending your opinions – buzzwords.

To defuse any counterargument, try to add an "ism" at the end of completely regular words to add a little razzle-dazzle. My personal suggestion would be using "whataboutism" anytime you're caught guilty of double standards. The way to successfully implement buzzwords into your arguments is throwing a bunch of them at a time really fast, which will automatically gaslight your opponent into thinking these are common words anyone should know.

The convolution theorem

If your expression of opinions is not in a verbal setting, then you have the edge. Hit Thesaurus on every other word. Don't worry about the proper applications of the convoluted words though. The average Homo sapien won't be able to parry the obstacle that your sesquipedalian glory will manifest.

Take up writing

Proclaim that writing is your passion. It doesn't matter whether you have a platform, go ahead and share that 1500-word status update that will exceed an HSC candidate's Bangla 2nd Paper essay in terms of length. If you can cement your reputation as a writer, you'll find that your opinions are being given more value than that of the layman's.

Never admit that you're wrong

Don't be afraid to resort to personal insults if your opinion isn't well-received. Being able to successfully play the part of a victim also works in a stellar way. If an argument ensues and you're left feeling unsatisfied, consider posting a picture of Tywin Lannister with the caption "The lion doesn't concern itself with the opinion of the sheep" right afterwards.

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Things to consider before you build YOUR PC

TAMJIDUL HOQUE

While buying a laptop or ready-made PC is relatively straightforward, the option to buy a custom-built PC is more appealing as it allows more flexibility in terms of choosing components and adjusting the budget. The process can be exciting but for someone who is not a tech enthusiast, it can be overwhelming as well.

Buying a PC is a long-term investment, given how expensive it can be. Thus, you want to get everything right. Here are some of the things you want to consider before you head on to buy one.

Firstly, you have to be sure why you want to build a PC and set the budget accordingly. Your PC won't be able to match your needs if you don't purchase the required parts or opt to buy something cheaper.

While getting a good deal is great, it shouldn't be your main concern. People often look for cheapest options and don't bother to check the reputation of the sellers.

Unfortunately, if a seller gives you a deal too good to be true, there's probably a catch. Many have suffered after stores gave them faulty components or took too long to replace or repair parts under warranty. It is better to buy components from a trusted dealer with good customer service even if it costs a little bit more.

After you have set your budget, it's time to start selecting your components. As mentioned before, you have to select your components based on why you want a computer. For example, video editing may require a GPU (graphics processing unit) with more VRAM while a PC for casual use may not need a dedicated GPU at all.

Along with that, you need to make sure the parts you will buy are compatible with each other. For example, certain processors require certain motherboards to function, certain GPUs require certain processors to prevent bottleneck.

While the shops you are buying from may help you out on these matters, it is better if you know exactly what you need so that the sellers can't take advantage of you and make you spend your valuable money on something you don't need.

Another important but often overlooked factor is selecting the right Power Supply Unit (PSU). A PSU protects other components from getting burned due to power surges or excessive voltage. Selecting the right PSU requires you to find out how much power the components of your PC will consume.

Computer store websites often have a "build your PC" feature where you can input the details of your components and it will show you how much power it requires.

Thus, if your PC consumes around 300-400 watt, you want a PSU of around 500 watt or more to keep your PC safe. Factors such as bronze/gold certification and whether a PSU is modular or semi modular should also be considered.

With the recent price drops on several PC parts, it's a good time to build the PC you have long planned and waited for. Regardless of what type of PC you are building, keeping the above-mentioned points in mind will help you make sure you build the best PC possible within your budget.

Tamjidul Hoque loves talking about football and watching anime. You can contact him at tamjidulh@gmail.com



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Storytellers

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

“Asif bhai, come take a look,” shouted Rizwan, “It’s been leaking for a few hours now.”

“Must be the pipes again,” said Asif on his way out, “You’re new here, aren’t you? It leaks like this once every month. It dries up pretty quick so I don’t really bother checking.”

Rizwan was all alone after Asif left. It was his second week as a security guard on the night shift. Something about leaking pipes in an old office building really crept him out. He tried concentrating on the sermon he was listening to on his phone but the sound of droplets hitting the carpet pierced through the silence. He stared up towards the wall and saw a drop hitting the ground. As it hit the ground, the sound of the drop morphed into a giant screech as it reached Rizwan.

Rizwan got up and stood under the spot where it was leaking. He stretched his arm out and a drop fell on his palm. It was a dark and gooey fluid and the longer he stared into the droplet, the wider it spread across his palm, engulfing, and devouring his skin cells. The silence grew louder than ever. He didn’t even realise the buzz in his ear until it stopped. He could hear a large thump upstairs.

He walked up the stairs and reached the door to an old storage unit. When he opened the door, the 5x5 unit was suddenly a large hall. With large printers, steel rollers and printing plates, the place reeked of ink. Rizwan could hear someone stack a bunch of papers behind the printers. Walking his way through stacks of papers covered in spider webs and dust, Rizwan saw an old man. The man had a hump on his back and his fingers were pitch black, probably covered in ink.

“I’m sorry, did I wake you up?” said the man as he kept writing something, “I’ll be done in 20 minutes.”

“No, I wasn’t sleeping,” said a startled Rizwan, “Excuse me, do you work here?”

“I used to,” smiled the old man, “I used to own this entire place. Before it was an insurance company, a garment factory, and now a bank. Back when this place had a life of its own.”

“What was it before?” asked Rizwan.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

“It was where people crafted stories, my boy!” the old man looked at Rizwan with a grin. He walked slowly towards Rizwan with glittering eyes, “It’s where they weaved dreams. Storytellers from all across the city would gather together on the last Saturday of every month and tell the most beautiful stories. We’d handpick 15 of them from hundreds and publish them. Readers would wait the entire month in anticipation to get their hands on the monthly issue of *Storytellers*. I’d go out after *Fazr* on our publication day and see school kids run out to the nearest hawker. I’ll never forget their shimmering eyes as they flipped through the pages, staring at the illustrations and intoxicated by the smell of fresh ink.”

“And then the money-men stepped in,” sighed the old man, “Unfortunately, smiles on a few school kids weren’t worth

running the magazine. They proposed some radical changes which I didn’t adhere to and they pulled out. The banks won’t provide a loan to a dying magazine and it was hard to keep the writers around without wages. I put my house on mortgage and took another loan but it was already too late.”

“And I guess that’s when you closed shop,” said Rizwan.

“Does it look like I’ve closed shop!” laughed the old man, “We chose 15 stories every month back then. But the rest of them? Those stories can’t go untold! I’ve been here for the last 30 years after the financiers pulled out and have been publishing a single copy of *Storytellers* every month with stories I discarded back then. Someone somewhere had a story to tell and I can’t let them go untold, my boy!”

The old man walked towards the ink

drum and picked up a knife. “I might’ve stopped existing 28 years back but my soul can’t rest until *Storytellers* tells every story it has to tell,” said the old man as he ran the knife along his palm. Blood and sweat dripped into the drum as he stretched his hand out.

“Ink’s too expensive, you see. I haven’t got much left in my body. I must publish all of them before I run out.”

Rizwan took a copy of *Storytellers* from the tray. The old man drew all the illustrations himself. The letters were indistinct and reddish with smudges all across the page. Rizwan stroked the title with his fingers and licked the tip of his thumb. It wasn’t ink that was leaking from the pipe downstairs.

Remind Ifti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com

LOVE WILL LIVE

A. M. FAHAD

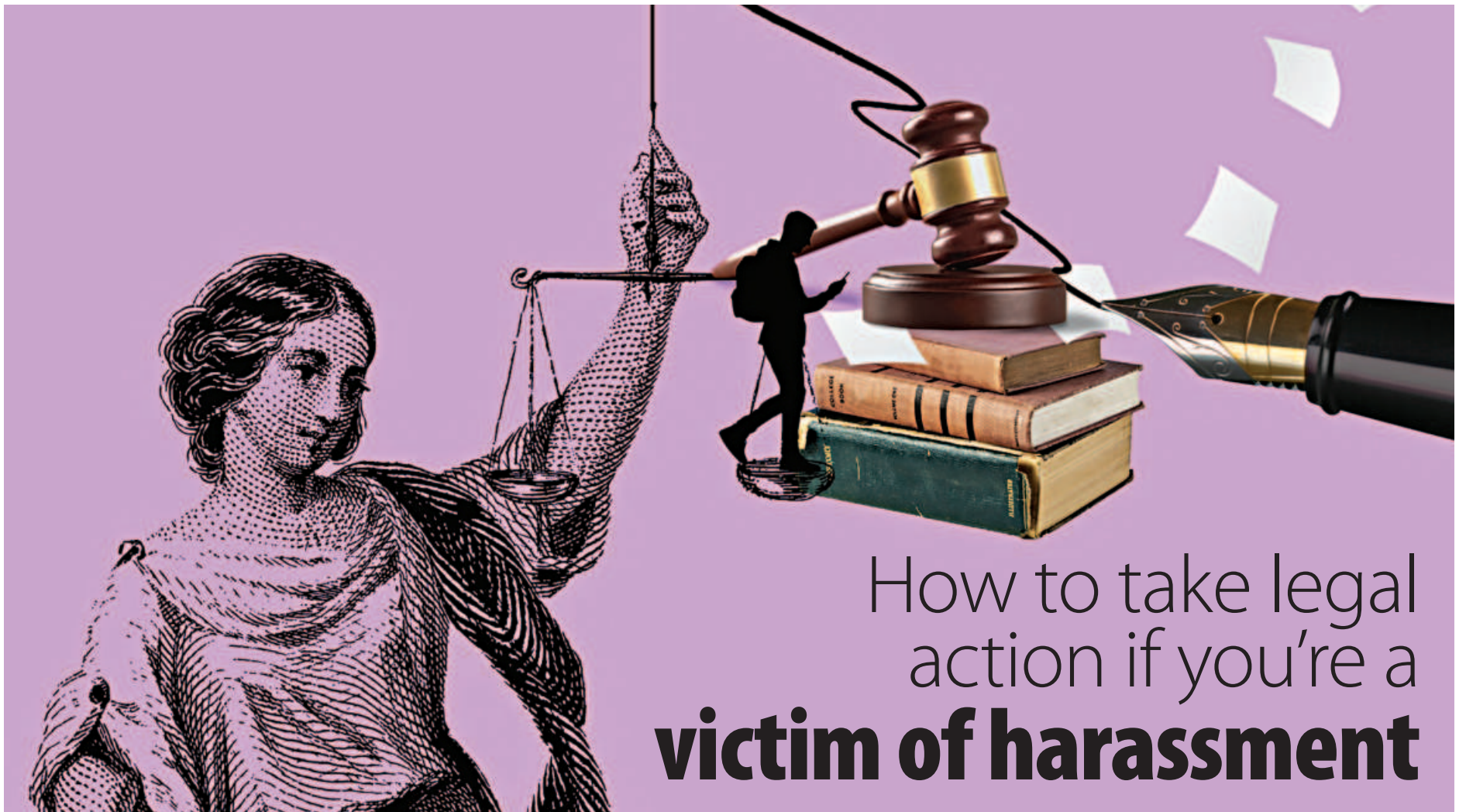
Or, it will pass like the ever-changing seasons.
Curled-up blankets that sing of the ache in your sore body,
It will crumble like paint on a cement wall,
Or skin on your fingers when
You touch the doorknob, and the wooden plank softly creaks open.
Light blinds your eyes.
You leave, and you leave traces of yourself behind
For the wind to follow you into hopes that unfurl into dreams,
And a place far from the present tense.

Love means the destruction of things, not necessarily of the self, But parts of the self you do not particularly like.
It means changing and accepting that you are as insubstantial as
The rusty leaves that fall, and so I ask you, today:
Will you wither away, here, with the fallen leaves
Or will you bloom into a new life with me?
Until love finds the fire escape to our lives,
I would, then, take you in, and I would wait for the seasons to change again.
Holding my breath, hoping that you do the same, for when spring arrives.



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ILLUSTRATION: SYEDA AFRIN TARANUM



How to take legal action if you're a victim of harassment

ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

SUMAIYA RASHID

Harassment can be described as actions that bother, threaten, intimidate, frighten, or make individuals worry for their safety. They are motivated by discriminatory intentions and have the effect of preventing or limiting a person from exercising their rights. Aside from physical assault, things like obstruction of normal movement or work, offensive touching, and offensive posters or cartoons that are objectionable to the eye are all included in this category. Harassment is unwanted, unsolicited behaviour that humiliates, offends, or threatens the victim and fosters a hostile atmosphere.

Being the victim of harassment can make one feel violated, terrified, and helpless. While taking legal action will not undo the harrowing experience, it can help to regain some control of the situation and attain a sense of justice.

In Bangladesh, children under the age of 18 can seek legal action with the assistance of a guardian, who will file the complaint on the children's behalf. Pursuing legal recourse as a young individual in Bangladesh who has experienced harassment can be a daunting and challenging process due to various factors. The societal stigma surrounding such situations further complicates matters. The fear of prejudice and judgement from society as a whole often deter victims from coming forward and reporting the crime.

However, it is not impossible, as Refat Bin Reza Rafi, Barrister-at-Law, explains the methods through which a victim might file a case against their harasser.

The initial step might be as simple as calling 999 in an emergency or contacting the police station to report the harassment. Before filing the First Information Report (FIR) based on the available

information, police will need an *ejahar* (application) from the victim or they will prepare their own based on their initial investigation. *Ejahar* serves as an accurate depiction of an event that has taken place, as it is documented promptly following a crime. The FIR initiates a General Register (GR) case, which allows the police station to take direct action if the crime is cognisable and falls under the station's jurisdiction. Following that, the police will open an investigation, make a chargesheet, which is a police station record documenting the charges filed against an individual, and forward it to court.

In the event of physical injury, it is advisable to prioritise seeking immediate medical attention and maintaining a record of the doctor's examination and treatments. This documentation can serve as valuable evidence to support your case in the future.

It is not strictly necessary to engage an advocate in a GR/FIR case since the Public Prosecutor (PP) will handle it on behalf of the state. However, if the situation permits, one may also decide to retain an advocate to support and strengthen their case.

The police may refuse to consider the issue in some cases. In that situation, submitting a General Diary (GD) is a recommended course of action. This helps create an official record of the incident and ensures that the necessary information is documented with the police authorities.

A GD will assist in making up for the time lost in filing a case if you are unable to use the general register path. While filing a case through other means, it is worth noting that submitting a GD can still provide valuable support to the case.

It is highly recommended to consult a lawyer when filing a GD, as their expertise can strengthen the document's evidentiary value in a criminal court. Their guidance ensures that the GD is prepared effectively

to bolster the case.

If you are unable to file a GR case, you may file a Complaint Register (CR)/Non-FIR case directly as a complainant in the criminal court. With the help of an advocate, victims can use this path and directly file a case in court.

The seriousness of harassment allegations varies, and when deciding whether to file charges, courts take into account things including the defendant's prior criminal history and violations of restraining orders.

The formal legal system sometimes may be expensive, requiring victims to go through several formalities and spend a significant amount of money on hiring an advocate to handle their case, court costs, and other requisite expenses.

Access to justice has remained a distant dream for our nation's young people. They are usually unable to receive justice from a court of law due to a variety of socio-economic limitations. If their rights are violated, they have no recourse.

Many young people who are victims come from underprivileged families and do not have the financial means to file a case. This may restrict their ability to obtain legal counsel and the tools they need to deal with the legal system. The Legal Aid Services Act of 2000 was established by the government in order to provide easy access to justice and protect the rights of underprivileged litigants. This act offers disadvantaged members of society free legal assistance, allowing government and non-government organisations at all levels to provide the most efficient and effective services to disadvantaged justice seekers.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Madaripur Legal Aid Organisation, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Service Trust (BLAST), Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK), Democracy Watch Bangladesh, Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh

(HIRPB), and various other local and national nongovernmental organisations provide various types of legal aid services. These services include legal aid in the form of cost and advice to conduct a suit in court, problem resolution through alternative dispute resolution (ADR), local *salish*, mediation, and so on, as well as community awareness campaigns to raise legal awareness.

The fear of retaliation is a major worry for those who have been in compromising circumstances. In order to stop victims from reporting the crime and seeking justice, perpetrators and their relatives may resort to violence and intimidation. To overcome these obstacles, awareness of legal rights need to be raised and victims need to be given access to resources and support networks.

Holding the individual or people accountable for their conduct sends a message that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This might provide closure and help victims to begin the healing process. Knowing there would be repercussions for their conduct may deter them from repeating similar acts. This can assist in making our societies safer and lower the chance of future criminal activity.

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Sumaiya is just trying to make it through each day; give her toxic positivism at sumrashid10@gmail.com