

A son taken too soon

Freedom fighter mourns loss of slain constable Suman Gharami

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY,
Bagerhat

"I fought for this country. I sacrificed my youth for the freedom of this land. How do I go on now that my son is no more?" asked 80-year-old freedom fighter Sushil Gharami.

His son, Suman Gharami, 35, a police constable posted at Khulna Police Lines, was beaten to death during a clash between agitators and the law enforcers in the city's Gollamari intersection during a protest on Friday.

Shushil's once strong, weathered face now shows the deep sorrow and helplessness that haunt him.

His home, "Bir Nibash", which was built by the state to honour those who fought in the Liberation War, now appears unbearably hollow, filled with overwhelming grief and despair that have consumed the family.

Gita Rani Gharami, 60-year-old mother of the slain policeman, was seen by the shallow grave that was dug for her son. Her eyes, red

from crying, stared blankly at the mound of earth that will soon cover Suman's body.

"Can you bring my son back?" she asks, her voice breaking up with every word. "Can anyone return my Suman to me?"

The loss of a child is a parent's worst nightmare, and for Gita Rani, that nightmare has become a harrowing reality.

Suman's younger sister, Sumona Gharami, recalls the devastating moment when she learned of her brother's death.

"It was around 7:15pm when my sister-in-law called me," Sumona said, her voice trembling. "She said, 'Your brother is no more. He is in the hospital.'"

The shock, disbelief, and sorrow that followed left her numb.

She said Suman was not only a dedicated police officer but also a beloved son and brother. The brutal nature of his killing has left his family demanding justice.

"I want justice," said Sushil Gharami, his voice carrying the unbearable pain of losing a son.

1,200 sued over killing of constable Sumon

BSS, Khulna

Police filed a case on Friday night with Labanchara Police Station against 1,200 people on the charge of killing constable Sumon Gharami.

Mostafa Saklain, sub-inspector of the police station, filed the case. No one was arrested yet to this end, said Momtazul Haque, officer-in-charge of Labanchara Police Station, yesterday.

On Friday, a large number of people under the banner of "Anti-Discrimination Student Movement" involved in a fierce clash with police in different areas of the city.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Mozammel Haque said constable Suman Gharami died after agitators beat him up. Police members found him with a serious head injury in Gallamari in the evening.

They rushed him to the nearby Khulna City Medical College Hospital, police said.

The hospital authorities said Suman was pronounced dead after he was brought there.

His body was handed over to his family members yesterday after an autopsy, said police.



PHOTO: STAR

2,000 families living amid waterlogging

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Around 2,000 families in the low-lying Balashpur Madhyapara area of Mymensingh city have been living amid seasonal waterlogging for the past several months.

Shafiqul Alam, a resident, said the menace has been a recurring one for the past one decade between the months of May and September.

"Earlier, waterlogging would ensue after rainfall and remain for a few days. Over the past 10 years or so, it has become unbearable. Every year, when rainfall begins, the area becomes waterlogged and will remain so for months until dry

season comes," said Farhad Riad, an undergraduate student and resident of the area.

"We have been suffering immensely due to waterlogging since last month as rainwater cannot drain away completely even after a moderate downpour," he added.

Hasna Hena, a housewife living in the area, said, "Often the area becomes submerged under knee-deep water. We have to remain alert to make sure small children stay indoors to prevent them from drowning in water."

"School and college-goers often have to skip their classes, while office-goers and other residents have to use rafts to

reach the main road from the area," said Nurul Kabir, another resident.

Locals also alleged that the water often enters homes and inundates the kitchens and toilets, leading to untold sufferings to the residents.

Despite repeated pledges offered by the authorities concerned, no step has yet been made to resolve the issue, they alleged.

The situation turned worse since 2013 after the construction of the Balashpur Madhyapara Road, which they alleged was done in an unplanned way.

Also, a drain through the area used to remove the water to let it flow into the

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Parents of Suman Gharami, 35, a police constable, still cannot come to grasp the passing of their son.

PHOTO: STAR

More than just NUMBERS

A 20-year-old shot dead in Uttara. A mason died of bullet wounds in Badda. A van puller shot dead in Jatrabari. At least 204 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters during the recent unrest. But these victims are not just statistics; they are sons, husbands, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.



He went to Dhaka to support his family

Says father of Hasan, 20, who was shot dead on July 18

ANWARUL HAIDER, Noakhali

Mahmudul Hasan, 20, was shot in the head on the evening of July 18 in Uttara, Dhaka during the unrest centring the quota reform protests.

He just got his diploma in electronics. Hasan was from the village of Charkailash Mahalla of Hatia.

On the day, when Hasan along with three friends were returning to their mess in Uttara's Rajalakshmi area, the firing suddenly started.

While fleeing the location, Hasan got shot in the head. His friends took him to a private hospital where the doctors declared him dead around 7:00pm.

His classmate Saurabh Hasan, who was there at the hospital with Hasan, shared this information with journalists.

Hasan's mother, Farida Yasmin, spoke to The Daily Star on Friday evening.

"My son Mahmudul Hasan passed the Diploma Engineering in Electronics from Lakshmipur Polytechnic Institute. He began his internship in an institution in Dhaka at the beginning of July. We were

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Who will call me Abba?

Death of Liton, 30, leaves family devastated

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Despite being the youngest son of the family, Liton Matubbar, 30, had to support and look after his elderly parents.

Liton, born into a poor family in Barguna's Sonar Bangla village, had to take the matter upon himself to ensure proper treatment for his parents. So, he came to Dhaka to work as a tile mason.

He was looking forward to making things better for his family; instead, his lifeless body returned to them, shattering their hopes and dreams.

Liton was shot during the violence centring the quota protests in the capital's Badda area on July 18, when he was returning from work.

He was rushed to Kurmitola General Hospital, where he died that night.

His body was brought back home the next day, and he was buried in his family graveyard.



"Although I have three other sons, Liton was the one who took care of us. Now who will look after us? Who will call me Abba? Who will tell me, 'Abba (father), don't worry, I will take care of everything'? I don't know what will happen to us now," said Liton's father Taiyab Ali Matubbar, 65.

"Liton lived in a rented house in Badda. He was shot while getting back from work

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Why did they shoot my father?

Asks son of van puller Jahangir



SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Jahangir Hossain Mridha, 51, was the sole earning member of his four-member family. He made his living delivering goods to shops in a van.

During the recent unrest, Jahangir was not able to drive his van for four days. As a result, there was no food in their house.

Therefore, Jahangir stepped out of his

home on the morning of July 19, hoping to buy vegetables that he would sell on his van. The plan was to return home that night with some rice and pulses after selling the vegetables.

While moving through the capital's Jatrabari area around 10:00am, a bullet hit Jahangir. He died on the spot.

Hailing from the Dwipasha village of Madanpura union in Patuakhali's Baulal upazila, Jahangir was the youngest of four brothers and two sisters. Jahangir once held just 1.5 decimals of land to his name, but eventually had to sell that due to poverty.

Jahangir was buried in his village near a pond beside his once paternal home on the night of July 19. Two days after his burial, his wife Laiju Begum, 18-year-old son Sujon and three-year-old son Shanto returned to Dhaka, where they currently reside.

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Heavy rain likely in Dhaka, four divisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has forecast light to moderate rain across the country till Tuesday morning.

Besides, moderately heavy to very heavy rainfalls will occur at some places, according to BMD's latest weather forecast.

Monsoon is active over Bangladesh and strong over North Bay, it said.

In the last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday, BMD recorded the country's highest rainfall at 231mm in Feni while Dhaka experienced 60mm rainfall.

Meteorologist Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallick said they have forecast heavy to very heavy rainfalls at parts of Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions.

Since last Tuesday, Chattogram, Rangamati, Bandarban, Hatia and Teknaf areas have experienced heavy rainfalls and therefore, there are chances of landslides in Chattogram hilly areas.

He said the country's all sea ports have been advised to hoist cautionary signal-3 to avert accident.

BMD has also advised several of the river ports at Dhaka, Noakhali, Faridpur, Chattogram and Patuakhali to hoist cautionary signal-1.

154 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 154 dengue patients were hospitalised with dengue in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, 36 patients were from outside the capital.

With the new cases, the total number of cases rose to 6,751. The number of deaths this year stands at 58.

Some 744 dengue patients are taking treatment in various hospitals.

Three including mother, son killed in road accident

BSS, Noakhali

At least three people, including a woman and her son, were killed in a road accident in Noakhali yesterday.

The accident took place on the Begumganj-Feni regional highway in Dokan Ghor area of Durgapur union under Begumganj upazila.

The deceased are CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver Jasim Uddin, 55, his mother Tahera Begum, 75, and his cousin Salimulla's wife Kohinur Begum, 45.

The accident occurred when a bus hit the auto-rickshaw coming from the opposite direction around 10:30am, leaving three dead on the spot, said Ruhul Amin, officer-in-charge of Chandraganj Highway Police Station. Police recovered the bodies from the spot, he said.

Filing of a case was underway, OC added.

RAIN, FLASH FLOOD Over 300 tourists stranded in Sajek

UNB, Dhaka

At least 300 tourists have been stranded in Sajek due to the suspension of road communication caused by flash floods and torrential rains for the last several days.

The Dighinala-Bakakhali road of Khagrachhari and Baghahat Bazar in Baghaichhari upazila of Rangamati district have been inundated.

The low-lying areas and houses were already submerged, which caused immense sufferings to residents. A portion of the Khagrachhari-Dighinala road was also inundated, suspending vehicular movement.

Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shirin Akter said the tourists were stranded at Sajek and failed to return home due to road communication suspension. Measures have been taken by the local administration, she said.

Besides, the Kachalong river was flowing above its danger level due to rain and onrush of water from upstream.

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