

## LYNCHING OF SHAMIM JU suspends 8 students

A CORRESPONDENT, JU

Jahangirnagar University last night suspended eight students over beating to death former Chhatra League leader Shamim Molla.

It also formed a four member committee to investigate the killing.

“The university’s proctorial team identified the eight students after analysing video footage and still pictures of the incident and submitted their names to the vice-chancellor. They have been suspended as per the university’s disciplinary regulations,” said JU VC Prof Kamrul Ahsan.

He was briefing reporters after an administrative meeting at his office yesterday evening.

The suspended students are Mohammad Razon Mia, a student of 46th batch of government and politics department, Raju Ahamed of 45th batch of the same department, Mahmudul Hasan Rayhan of 50th batch of English department, Jubayer Ahmed of 44th batch of history department, Hamidullah Salamn of 49th batch of English department, Atikuzzaman Atik of 49th batch

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Students, under the banner of Ganatantrik Chhatra Jote, take out a torch procession at Dhaka University last night protesting the lynching of two people at DU and Jahangirnagar University.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 30 indigenous

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started attacking indigenous people and torching their business establishments.

“Like many, we fled from the area and took shelter in the forest. From here, we could see the blaze and smoke. We fear many of our houses and businesses have been torched,” she told The Daily Star in the evening over the phone.

Avenue Sangma, who owns a shop at Larma Square in Dighinala upazila town, said, “My shop was vandalised and later torched at around 5:30pm. As far as I saw, some 30 to 40 shops were torched in this area.

“We could barely save our lives by fleeing to the forest areas.”

When contacted, former Dighinala upazila parishad chairman Dharma Joyti Chakma confirmed the arson attacks but could not specify how many houses and establishments were targeted.

He said the situation escalated when the settlers beat up a coconut hawker from an indigenous community.

“A similar incident almost took place yesterday [Wednesday] when a group of settlers gathered in Khagrachhari town and were shouting provocative slogans against indigenous people.”

Md Arefin Jewel, superintendent of police of Khagrachhari district, told The Daily Star, “Tension is running high in Dighinala, centring the death of a man named Mamun, who was killed by a mob a day ago.

Citing the police database, he said Mamun was wanted in 17 cases, including 14 on theft charges.

He was beaten by locals on suspicion of possible theft on Wednesday.

“As the man was a Bangali... a group of people trying to incite violence over the incident started demonstrating and torched shops in Boalkhali Natun Bazar [adjacent to Larma Square],” SP Jewel told this newspaper around 7:30pm,

Asked if fires were doused yet, he said, “It is a remote place, and the fire service also needs an escort to reach the spot.

“Army is already on duty in Dighinala. We’re trying to bring the situation under control along with the army and BGB members.”

Till the filing of this report at 8:00pm, there was tension between hill dwellers and Bangali settlers in different areas of Khagrachhari, said locals.

Contacted, Ahsan Habib Palash, range DIG of Police in Chattogram, said the law enforcement agencies were trying to bring the situation under control, adding, “A joint patrol by the army, police and BGB is going on.”

[Our correspondent from Rangamati and staff correspondent from Chattogram contributed to the report]

## DU suspends

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Meanwhile, top leaders of various student organisations criticised the decision of the DU syndicate last night.

Nasir Uddin Nasir, general secretary of pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, told The Daily Star, “The decision to stop student politics is undemocratic, unconstitutional and a violation of fundamental rights. The democratic environment of the Dhaka University will be destroyed and the activities of secret organisations will increase. We demand the withdrawal of this ill-advised decision.”

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front President Salman Siddiqui said banning student politics means taking away the right to protest and assemble, which is contrary to the aspirations of the uprising and detrimental to freedom of expression.

On August 7, when DU dorms reopened, a group of students held protest marches, rallies, and sit-ins, demanding an end to partisan politics on campus.

They threatened not to go to classes or sit for exams if partisan politics were not stopped on campus.

## They beat him, fed him, then killed him

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but nothing was done to stop the lynching.

By the time the university administration took Tofazzal to Shahbagh Police Station, nearly five hours had passed and he was barely breathing. Police were surprised that the officials brought a dying man to a police station instead of taking him to a hospital.

A vehicle of the DU Proctor’s office then took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

Amid widespread outrage over the killing, the university administration yesterday filed a case.

As of last night, police arrested six students named Muhammad Jalal Mia, Suman Mia, Mottakin Shakin, Al Hussain Sajjad, Wajibul Alam, and Ahsanullah.

### THE LAST SUPPER

After the first round of torture, the students took Tofazzal to the canteen and bought him a meal.

Some took photos and filmed him eating and shared those on social media groups, writing, “A thief has been apprehended at FH Hall. After beating him up, we are feeding him. He will tell us the names of his gang members after eating.”

Young men were heard laughing and joking in the background.

After dinner, Tofazzal was taken to the guest room of the extension building, where witnesses say he was tortured again.

### SCENES OF BRUTALITY

In another footage, Tofazzal is seen lying on the floor littered with blood stains. His body was covered in bruises.

A cricket stump was placed on his arm, and two students took turns jumping over it as Tofazzal pleaded for them to stop.

One of the students has been identified as Jalal, a student of physics. He was also a former deputy secretary of science and technology affairs of the dormitory’s Chhatra League unit.

He resigned from Chhatra League to join the quota reform protests in July.

In another video, Shakin, a student of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, is seen repeatedly hitting Tofazzal with a stump.

Jalal told this newspaper that he was not involved with the beating.

### SIX STOLEN PHONES

After six phones were stolen while students were playing cricket in the afternoon, the students were looking for the thief.

Then a group caught Tofazzal

loitering near the gate. At least five students said Tofazzal was not near the place from when the phones were lost.

While students were hitting him at the guest room, Tofazzal said he was involved in the stealing and would tell them everything, but he needed to eat first.

The students fed him and later started beating him again.

Almost three hours after Tofazzal was caught, a team from the proctor’s office arrived around 9:30 but failed to intervene.

A team member, requesting anonymity, said, “When we reached there, the students stopped us, saying we would have to return their phones if we wanted to rescue Tofazzal. Only when his condition became critical did they hand him over to us.”

House Tutor Sheikh Zahir Raihan, who went to the scene minutes after Tofazzal was caught, said, “The students were not listening to us. We tried our best.”

A witness said, “A student asked the house tutors, ‘Have your phones been stolen? Why are you interfering? Let us handle this.’”



PHOTO: COLLECTED

CCTV footage shows that around 11:00pm, two students helping Tofazzal get into a vehicle of the proctor’s office.

The vehicle went directly to Shahbagh Police Station. Contacted, the station’s Officer-in-Charge Shahabuddin Shaheen said, “When the proctorial team brought him, his condition was critical. We told them to go to Dhaka Medical.”

As per Dhaka Medical College Hospital records, Tofazzal had died before he was taken there.

The inquest report mentions he might have died from internal

bleeding and there were injury marks on his back, arms, and lower parts of his body.

When asked why they didn’t take him directly to the hospital, an official of the proctor’s office said, “We followed the protocol. We didn’t think his condition was that severe. He was still alive when we took him to DMCH.”

### WHO WAS TOFAZZAL?

Tofazzal’s father died in an accident in 2016 and his mother died from cancer in 2019. His elder brother, who was a police officer, also died of cancer in 2023.

According to his cousins Riyazul Islam and Asma Akhter, his mental health deteriorated after that. He didn’t live anywhere for long and drifted between his hometown Barguna and Dhaka.

“He often sought refuge at Dhaka University, where he felt safe,” Riyazul said.

Asma said after 11:00pm on Wednesday, her father received two phone calls from men introducing themselves as DU students.

They demanded Tk 35,000, and asked him to go to the campus if



PHOTO: COLLECTED

he wanted to save

Tofazzal.

Tofazzal’s sister-in-law Shilpi, who lives in Pirojpur, also received calls from the same numbers. The callers demand Tk 2 lakh from her.

On Truecaller, the numbers are recorded as “Mafi Junior Infs” and “Mehedi Vai M”.

DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed said, “The university authority is fully cooperating with the investigation.”

Hundreds of students demonstrated on campus throughout yesterday, demanding justice for the killing.

## Dec 31

Minister Sheikh Hasina’s extradition from India, he said Bangladesh has a treaty with the neighbouring country.

“As per the treaty, Bangladesh can seek extradition of anyone convicted – whoever he or she is.”

The prosecutors of the International Crimes Tribunal have already been appointed and there is other progress made for trying the ones accused of crimes against humanity during the July protest.

“Soon, the trial process will begin and then we will seek extradition of the former Prime Minister from India,” Nazrul added.

Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominur Rahman will lead the Judicial Reform Commission, Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury the Public Administration Reform Commission, Safar Raj Hossain the Police Administration Reform Commission, Iftekharuzzaman the Anti-Corruption Reform Commission and Ali Riaz the Constitutional Reform Commission.

## Orion Group sues Independent TV for defamation

Seeks Tk500cr in  
compensation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Orion Group yesterday filed a Tk 500 crore defamation case against Independent Television for airing “defamatory and false reports aimed at damaging the company’s reputation”.

The case filed with the court of Dhaka’s Fourth Joint District Judge Tamanna Farah set October 10 for a hearing on its acceptance, said Shahriar Ahmed, the plaintiff’s lawyer.

Independent TV’s Editor-in-Chief and CEO M Shamsur Rahman and reporter Abdullah Al Rafi are among the defendants.

According to the case statement, on September 13, Independent TV broadcasted a misleading report stating that Orion Group

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## Lynch mobs

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Between January and June this year, 32 people died in the hands of mobs across the country, according to rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra.

But between August 11 and yesterday, during this interim government’s rule, 21 people were lynched in 14 districts, The Daily Star found scanning media reports.

Of the victims, 12 were beaten to death after mobs accused them of theft, robbery, or mugging while the remaining nine were killed after being accused of other crimes.

Between August 11 and 31, at least nine individuals were killed in six districts. In September so far, 12 more were killed in 10 districts.

The Daily Star contacted 16 officers-in-charge concerned of police stations. They said 11 cases had been filed over the lynching incidents, no case was filed regarding two incidents, and that they knew nothing about the other three incidents.

At least 10 OCs told this newspaper that the frequent transfers of officers coupled with a lack of resources and the overall “chaotic state” made it difficult to properly investigate such cases.

So far, two people were arrested in a case filed for beating Siraj Hawlader dead in Khulna city on September 4.

Yesterday, police detained six DU students over the killing of Tofazzal.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday regretted the deaths in DU and JU.

Veteran lawyer ZI Khan Panna said, “What does it matter to the public if he [the home adviser] is upset? What steps has he taken...”

“Why is there no attention to law and order? Do they [interim government] not read newspapers? Do they not live in this country?”

He said the lack of concrete action by law enforcement agencies and the deteriorating law and order were enabling the mobs.

“These incidents are painful, shameful, and unspeakable,” he added.

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said, “After the dictator was deposed through an uprising, a group of people now believe that they

## Singapore FIU seeks info

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\$1 billion, acquiring hotels, homes, retail spaces, and other properties over the past decade without permission from Bangladesh Bank.

S Alam controlled six banks and a financial institution in Bangladesh. However, following former prime minister Sheikh Hasina’s resignation on August 5 amid political unrest, it lost control of these banks.

The central bank has since restructured their boards, and S Alam allegedly withdrew over Tk 1 lakh crore from them.

In response, the government, Bangladesh Bank, BFIU, and the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) have taken strict measures against the controversial business conglomerate.

BFIU has frozen the personal accounts of individuals linked to S

Alam Group, and banks have restricted transactions with the company.

On the other hand, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) found that some entities of the S Alam Group and some family members of the group’s founder Mohammed Saiful Alam have around Tk 26,000 crore in six banks.

The six banks are Islami Bank Bangladesh, Al Arafah Islami Bank, Exim Bank, Bangladesh Commerce Bank, National Bank and First Security Islami Bank.

On September 12, S Alam Group requested financial, social, and legal support from the government and the central bank to recover losses caused by the account freezes.

Some banks have begun unblocking S Alam Group’s accounts, according to central bank officials.

## Myanmar flood death toll climbs to 268

AFP, Yangon

The death toll in Myanmar in the wake of Typhoon Yagi has reached 268, with 88 people missing, the junta has said, as state media reported the first arrival of foreign aid.

Yagi swept across northern Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar more than a week ago, triggering floods and landslides that have killed 588 people across the region, according to official figures.

The floods in 56 townships in Myanmar had resulted in “268 deaths and 88 people missing”, the junta’s information team said in a statement on Wednesday.

It also said that nearly 270,000 hectares (more than 660,000 acres) of rice and other crops had been submerged, and more than 100,000 farm animals killed.

The previous death toll reported by state TV was 226, with 77 people missing.