

Dubious cases are an injustice to July massacre victims



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MOSTAFA SHABUI

A report in *The Daily Star*, titled "Dubious cases weaken quest for justice," cites the case statement of 45-year-old Mohammad Habib, killed during the July uprising, as an example of a dubious case. Habib, an organising secretary of a front organisation of the Liberal Democratic Party, was shot dead when police, along with Awami League men, opened fire on the protesters in the capital's Kadamtali area on July 20.

On August 28, Habib's wife, Ayesha Begum, filed a case against 57 people at Jatrabari police station. Out of the 57 accused, 50 are from the Chandina Upazila of Cumilla.

Ayesha told this daily that she did not know whose names were included as accused in the case. A friend of her husband, who is from Cumilla and a leader of Liberal Democratic Party, entered the names of the accused. Ayesha only signed the complaint copy.

This is not an isolated incident. During the quota reform movement, police filed hundreds of cases against students and general people under false accusations. Most of those cases were withdrawn after Hasina's fall. However, after August 5, cases are being filed against hundreds of people in the same manner, as seen in media reports.

In Bogura, several protesters died from police firing during the protest according to family members, witnesses, and media reports. But when their relatives and family members filed cases after the fall of

AL, they did not accuse the police. Instead, they accused hundreds of local AL political leaders and activists. In some instances, they accused several journalists. Therefore, several questions have arisen about the merit of the cases, one of them being, "Will the victims get justice?"

Zi Khan Panna, a veteran Supreme Court lawyer, shared, "It is impossible to ensure justice for the real victims through cases that seem to be aimed at harassing people."

So, what happens if a person is falsely accused in any type of criminal case in Bangladesh? First and foremost, the person and his/her family members are generally harassed in various ways. The falsely accused and their families remain under immense mental pressure. However, if the accused takes recourse through a lawyer in court, they suffer financially, and face social stigmatisation as well. They are also rendered unable to perform normal activities, and by extension, unable to support or care for dependents or other members of the family.

Many of my journalist friends who have been accused in such cases have fled from their workplaces to avoid unexpected arrests. Their family members are also in great distress.

Most of the cases filed after the mass uprising are murder cases. There are many sections and charges imposed in these cases that are non-bailable in the lower courts. As a result, the accused has to proceed to the High Court for bail. However, many of them can't afford a High

Court lawyer.

On the other hand, the person who files a case to get justice is squarely liable for the harassment of an innocent person. It is a kind of ethical crime on part of the complainant even if he/she commits it knowingly or unknowingly while seeking justice.

Even in 2013-14, the AL government accused many BNP Jamaat leaders

sacrifice made to bring about an era with renewed hope for fairness.

What is the future of these recently filed murder cases? Will the victims get justice? And will those who were not involved in the incident get fair trials?

When asked about whether the proceedings of these cases can finally be concluded, a few police officers

the ones directly/apparently involved.

Even if the charge sheet is submitted, these cases would not see positive results because the plaintiff and the witnesses would not be able to identify the accused in court. As a result, they will not be able to say anything substantial about the accused. In that case, the investigating officer will give the Final Report True

family will get justice. Therefore, there is every possibility for justice to get delayed—and for justice to get denied.

Meanwhile, a group of people will benefit from the *greftaar o jamin banijyo* (arrest and bail business).

Another issue raised was the police's heavy involvement in the July massacre. So the police should not investigate the cases for the sake of fairness, as a judge friend shared.

So, what is the solution? Will the judicial investigation be effective?

Under previous governments, the legal system was used to repress dissent. During that time, judges often could not act independently.

However, legal experts opined that there should be a judicial investigation into these cases. The government should create an environment in which the judges can work independently. Logistical support should be provided to the judicial magistrate. Additionally, a medical team should be assigned to prepare forensic reports of all the incidents and assist the judicial probe.

At the same time, the lengthy legal process in our country should be reformed because it impacts not just the victims and their families, but also the accused. These reforms in the legal and judicial systems are long overdue. Now is the right time to make these reforms because the interim government running the country has announced its intention to ensure citizens' rights, including their right to justice.

A report in this daily mentioned that the police headquarters on September 10 ordered officers to drop the names of individuals against whom there was no evidence. It's a good move by the interim government and we appreciate the decision. It should be implemented as soon as possible so that people falsely accused can get back to their normal lives, and those who were wronged during the July-August uprising can get proper justice.



VISUAL: ANWER SOHEL

Let's make Yunus's Mandela moment count



Dr Shakil Ahmed is a private investor and retired quant hedge fund manager.

SHAKIL AHMED

So much has happened in such a short period in Bangladesh that it may not have dawned on everyone how important this moment is in a geopolitical context. Never before in the history of this nation have we been in the world spotlight like this. At the United Nations General Assembly, foreign leaders were virtually lining up to meet with Dr Yunus and he literally could not manage the time to accommodate everyone. There was a Nelson Mandela-esque aura about Dr Yunus, and everywhere he went, world leaders would stop to give him a hug. This is our moment. We need to seize the moment and make the most of it. Anything less would be the biggest missed opportunity in centuries.

When I came to college in the US in the early 80s, I was generally met with blank stares when I told people I was originally from Bangladesh. My absolute favourite was one fellow student who asked me in all seriousness, "Is that somewhere near Modesto?" Modesto, for those who may not be familiar, is a town about 90 miles east of Berkeley, California. In the many decades that have passed since then, Bangladesh has become a bit more familiar to people, but usually for all the wrong reasons. Sadly, whenever Bangladesh has been in the news, it has been for things like natural disasters, our abysmal placements in the corruption or human rights rankings, or issues like RMG factory safety and labour rights. Our geopolitical standing in the world was about as low as possible. Our past leaders would struggle to get any sort of audience with any of the major world leaders. Even two months ago, it was unthinkable that a Bangladeshi leader would be at the centre of attention at the largest gathering of world leaders, and yet here we are now.

Repairing a tarnished image is generally a very difficult, uphill task. Right now, though, we stand before a unique opportunity to turbocharge this task in the context of the Bangladesh brand. At the start of any rebranding, you need credible leadership and commitment. The world laid out the red carpet for Dr Yunus. Regardless of your political affiliation, and whether you support the current interim government, you have to recognise this reality and this momentary opportunity to reshape our image. Do this right and it will pave the way for the next

development projects both bilaterally and multilaterally with countries, without the threat of virtual veto by any one country. An independent and sovereign Bangladesh, which acts in its own interests for the benefit of its own people, is in the interest of each and every citizen.

As has been well publicised by now, the previous kleptocracy managed to smuggle billions of US dollars abroad, virtually emptying the banks in the process. Retrieving this money is a long and arduous process, but most importantly, impossible without the cooperation of the foreign governments with jurisdiction over the places where this money was laundered and invested. Coordinating with these governments, their institutions, their banks and capital markets, and convincing them to help track and then repatriate the money to Bangladesh requires masterful diplomacy. With a global icon at the helm, the task is much more likely to be successful. Bangladesh desperately needs the money and



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PHOTO: CHIEF ADVISER'S PRESS WING

to work. This will require some serious work on reforming the red tape around foreign investment and the capital markets. People may not agree with everything that is being proposed, but everyone owes it to the country to throw their weight behind the efforts so as not to miss this opportunity.

Similarly, the plentiful global promises to assist in reforming and rebuilding will allow us to establish a much more balanced foreign policy as originally formulated by the very first Bangladesh administration, "Friendship to all, malice to none." Unfortunately, over time, the country has veered away from this guiding light and allowed itself to be dominated both politically and economically by a much larger power. The current attention from major economies can be utilised to discuss

with Dr Yunus as our chief adviser, we may have our best shot at being able to convince many of the foreign countries to cooperate.

Globalisation has meant that no country can operate in a vacuum. Nations are increasingly dependent on one another. But it is also important to remain independent of hegemonic powers. The celebrity-level reception of Dr Yunus on the world stage, the entire aura about him, the embrace from world leaders and the outpouring of support are things we absolutely cannot afford to take lightly. The current interim government does not have long-term political aspirations, but while they steer the country towards elections, we must not miss this special moment. This is our 15 minutes in the spotlight. Let us please not waste it.

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Ref: No. SRNGIH/MSR Tender/2024-2025/1111 Date: 01/10/2024

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e-Tender are invited in e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Director, Sheikh Russel National Gastroenterology Institute & Hospital, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 for the Procurement of:

Sl. No	Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/proposal publication date & time	Tender/proposal last selling date & time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date & time
1.	1015666, GR-SRNGIH-11A	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
2.	1016360, GR-SRNGIH-11C	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
3.	1017338, GR-SRNGIH-11D	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
4.	1016575, GR-SRNGIH-11E	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
5.	1017342, GR-SRNGIH-11F	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
6.	1020475, GR-SRNGIH-11G	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
7.	1020477, GR-SRNGIH-11H	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
8.	1017354, GR-SRNGIH-12A	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
9.	1017355, GR-SRNGIH-12B	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
10.	1017356, GR-SRNGIH-12C	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
11.	1017358, GR-SRNGIH-12D	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
12.	1017359, GR-SRNGIH-12E	Procurement of Chemical Re-agent, ECG Paper & X-ray Film	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
13.	1022654, GR-SRNGIH-7A	Procurement of Medicine (Non EDCL)	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
14.	1022684, GR-SRNGIH-7B	Procurement of Medicine (Non EDCL)	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
15.	1020327, GR-SRNGIH-06	Procurement of Stationery & others	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00
16.	1022124, GR-SRNGIH-03	Procurement of Computer Accessories	01-Oct-2024 17:30:00	22-Oct-2024 15:00:00	23-Oct-2024 11:00:00

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Prof. Dr. Md. Golam Kibria
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