

MURADNAGAR RAPE Hounded by media, survivor forced to leave father's home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

The survivor of the June 26 Muradnagar rape left her father's home yesterday following relentless harassment by media workers and YouTubers.

"The family is no longer at the house," confirmed Zahidur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Muradnagar Police Station. "Since the incident, people from different backgrounds had been visiting the house every day. The woman's life became unbearable due to constant pressure to give interviews to media workers and YouTubers. Amid this distress, she chose to leave."

On June 26, the survivor was raped by one Fajar Ali, and a video of hers was also recorded and later circulated on social media.

She later filed two cases under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act and the Pornography Control Act. Police later arrested Fajar and three others.

Muradnagar resident Abdur Rob Member said the woman left yesterday afternoon with her two children, saying she was returning to her husband's home. Law enforcers assisted with her relocation at her request.

Her parents and other family members also vacated the house later in the day. None of them could be reached over the phone for comments.

According to police, crowds gathered daily at the home, invading her privacy. "Many ignored legal guidelines and published videos revealing her face, causing her further distress."

Inspector Md Sadekur Rahman of Cumilla Court Police told Prothom Alo that a seven day remand prayer was submitted yesterday for the four currently in jail in connection with the cases.

Judge Mominul Haque of Cumilla Senior Judicial Magistrate Court has scheduled the remand hearing for Thursday.

Sadekur added that the mobile phones of the arrestees have been seized and will be sent to the Criminal

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ON THIS DAY LAST YEAR



Students block the Shahbagh intersection on July 2, 2024, demanding the reinstatement of the 2018 government circular that abolished the quota system in civil service recruitment and the introduction of a merit-based system. FILE PHOTO

Protesters brave rain, warning

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medha medha" (Merit, not quota) and "Boishomyer biruddhe, direct action" (Direct action against discrimination). By the time they reached Shahbagh, a heavy police presence had already taken position. Students, undeterred, shouted "Bhua bhua" (fake, fake) at the law enforcement agency. No clash occurred, and the police eventually stepped aside.

"This movement is not just about students or job seekers – it's about the kind of state we want to build," said Nahid Islam, coordinator of the movement, addressing the gathering. "The spirit of the Liberation War is not a hereditary privilege; it is a national ideal. We, the youth, are upholding that spirit by standing against discrimination."

He announced that the protests would continue the next day with a sit-in at 2:30pm in front of the Dhaka University library and urged students across all universities and colleges in the country to join the movement simultaneously under a united banner.

For nearly an hour, the protesters held their ground at Shahbagh before lifting the blockade around 4:45 pm.

From there, they marched towards the vice chancellor's residence of Dhaka University, where they demanded the reopening of the university library, which had remained shut for two days. Teachers, officials, and staffers of public universities have been abstaining from work since July 1 in protest against the government's Universal Pension Scheme, prolonging the stalemate in the activities of higher educational institutions across the country.

While Dhaka University became the epicentre of the day's protests, similar demonstrations unfolded across other campuses as well. At Jahangirnagar University, a group of students blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway around 3:00pm, demanding the cancellation of the reinstated quota system along with three other demands. The blockade lasted for about 20 minutes and resulted in a two-kilometre traffic snarl in both directions. Earlier, the students had held a protest rally from the base of the Shangshaptak sculpture near the university's central library.

The protesters had also announced plans to enforce a two-hour highway

blockade again on July 3, from 3:00pm to 5:00pm—further intensifying the spread of the movement beyond the capital.

Students from Barishal University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, and Islamic University in Kushtia also organised processions and rallies, occupying campus roads and entry points.

Earlier in the day, around 10:30am, members of the pro-government organisation Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sontan Sangsad gathered in front of the Raju Sculpture at Dhaka University, opposing the anti-quota protests and advocating for the preservation of the 30 percent quota for children of freedom fighters.

By its second day, the anti-quota protest showed no signs of slowing down. With swelling participation, coordinated action, and a powerful moral claim, the movement was rapidly transforming into a nationwide youth uprising – challenging not just a single policy but the deeply rooted structures of privilege and inequality.

'Rights abuses persist under this govt too'

Says JSS report on CHT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Even after 11 months in power, the interim government has failed to bring about any fundamental changes or progress in the situation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) has alleged.

There has been no initiative to end the ongoing human rights violations in the CHT, said a half-yearly report signed by Sajib Chakma, assistant information and publicity secretary of the PCJSS.

The organisation also bemoaned a lack of progress in implementing the peace accord, noting that two-thirds of its provisions remain unfulfilled even after 27 years.

The report claimed that 103 incidents of rights violations occurred across the region between January and June this year.

As per the report, security and law enforcement forces, along with settler groups, religious extremists, and land grabbers, were allegedly involved in the incidents.

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LAWYER ALIF MURDER Charges pressed against Chinmoy, 37 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police pressed charges against 38 people yesterday, including Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, a former ISKCON leader, in connection with the murder case of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif, who was hacked to death on November 26 last year.

Mahfuzur Rahman, assistant commissioner (AC) of Kotwali zone, also the investigating officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the metropolitan court's prosecution section this evening.

Confirming the charge sheet submission, AC Mahfuzur told The Daily Star, "I submitted the charge sheet implicating 38 persons, including Chinmoy Krishna Das. The murder took place following the instigation and provocation by Chinmoy."

Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Advocate Raihanul Wazed Chowdhury of the Metropolitan Court said, "The charge sheet was submitted to the court's prosecution section, and the hearing on the charge sheet will be held on the next scheduled date of the murder case."

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'Seize the moment to anchor democracy'

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She was speaking on the first day of BNP's 36-day programme marking the 2024 July uprising.

"It must be ensured that the bloodshed and the tears of grieving mothers are not in vain. Unity must be maintained," she told the event at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre via a video link.

The party will organise the rest of the programme in different places across the country.

Khaleda stressed the need for generating employment and ensuring people's security. "Above all, we must safeguard Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty at any cost."

Family members of those who lost their lives in political movements, including last year's mass uprising, spoke at the event.

Khaleda said there should be a comprehensive list of the victims of abduction, murder, and extrajudicial killings.

"Arrangements for swift justice and state recognition must be ensured. There must be a dignified rehabilitation and secure future for every family."

For 16 years, the fascists tried to establish a one-party regime forever, she said. "The Awami League regime sought to destroy democracy through repression, torture, arrest, killing, enforced disappearance, and murder."

A prayer was offered seeking peace for the departed souls. The participants also stood in silence for a minute in honour of the martyrs.

While the family members of the martyred and victims of enforced disappearance spoke, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, who joined the event from London, and many others in the audience were seen wiping away tears.

While inaugurating the event Tarique said unity was more important than ever and urged political parties to carefully consider whether the proportional representation system was suitable for Bangladesh.

"A proportional representation electoral system might divide the society," he said, urging political parties to reconsider their position.

Some political parties demand a proportional representation system, which is practiced in certain countries. "I urge everyone to carefully consider how suitable, or whether it is suitable at all, for Bangladesh at this moment, given the reality and the country's geographical-political context."

"We must seriously consider whether, in the name of a proportional electoral system, we are unknowingly opening the door for the return of the fallen, defeated, and fugitive evil forces into the country's politics."

If the parties keep on raising new issues one after another, the conspirators will get a chance to rise again, he added.

"The political parties have given reform proposals after thoughtful consideration. I firmly believe that each

party has presented what they consider to be the best for the country," he said.

If the interim government is busy with the reform issues, it might prevent the people from accessing their political and economic rights, he added.

"Even if there is no consensus among political parties on every issue, consensus in the national interest is essential."

"In the upcoming national election, if the BNP receives the people's mandate to govern the state, it will form a national government and make the utmost effort to implement every development programme for the country and its people."

Now is the time to repay the debt to the martyrs by building a justice-based democratic and humane Bangladesh, he said.

As political parties have different views and programmes, it might seem like anti-fascist forces are not united, but "for national interest, we are all united."

To establish Bangladesh on a strong democratic foundation, Tarique said the country must be freed from

They demanded proper treatment and trial of the atrocities.

Many in the audience, including Tarique, were seen wiping away tears, moved by the speeches of the victims of enforced disappearances, especially when Parvej Hossain's daughter, a Chitra Dal leader, spoke at the event.

Abida Islam Hridi said, "After August 5, I thought I would get my father back. But I still haven't found him, I haven't heard anything. When will I find my father? When I went to Aynagar, I saw my name written on the wall. Maybe my father suffered while writing my name, but all the names have been erased."

"Will we never get our fathers back? Will my brother never see our father? Who will make this happen?" she asked.

She said she hoped the government would find her father, but after 10 years, I see nothing has been done.

"Tarique Rahman will find my father. Even if he doesn't, he will make sure the people who took my father away are held accountable."



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses the event via a video link. PHOTO: STAR

subservience.

At the beginning of the event, a documentary titled 'National Unity and Democratic Journey' based on the July-August mass uprising was screened.

Speaking as a special guest, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "Blaming the BNP simply because it is a major party will not be conducive to unity."

Regarding the July Charter, he said the BNP had already extended its support to finalise it, and now it was the government's responsibility to complete the process.

BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas said, "Many parties are making various demands to disrupt the election... We must stay united to move the country forward."

BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said while democratic political parties may have differences, they must remain united in the interest of the nation.

FAMILIES DEMAND JUSTICE

At least 17 individuals, including family members of those killed or injured during the uprising, addressed the event.

Parvez, from the capital's Bangshal area, was picked up from Shahbagh by members of a law enforcement agency on December 2, 2013, said family members.

At the event, Fatematuz Zohra, the mother of Abdullah Bin Jahid, who was killed in the 2024 uprising, said, "My 16-year-old son was shot dead near the airport. My younger son has cancer, and my husband has also passed away. The government hasn't looked at us."

Ananta Kumar Das, father of Biswajit Das, said, "We still did not get justice for my son. He was killed in broad daylight, yet no proper justice has been served. I hold onto the hope that I will see justice for my son's death before I leave this world."

Ramzan Ali, the elder brother of Abu Sayed, said, "If Abu Sayed hadn't bravely stood in front of Rokeya University, exposing his chest, the demands would not have been easily met. His sacrifice played a key role in Sheikh Hasina's downfall."

He also called for greater attention to the families of those injured during the movement.

Remember July to resist fascism

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"We will do it [commemorate this uprising] every year so that autocracy cannot rise again in any form."

Students began protests against the quota system in government jobs on July 1 last year. The movement quickly gained momentum, fuelled by the government's harsh and brutal response.

What started as a demand for reform soon transformed into an all-out anti-government movement, calling for the resignation of then prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The mass uprising culminated in her ouster on August 5.

Around 1,400 people were killed during the uprising, according to a report of a United Nations fact-finding mission.

Yunus said one year ago, in this month, the movement initiated by the students sparked an unprecedented mass uprising that gave all a taste of liberation. July uprising became a powerful call in the struggle to restore democracy, a moment of public awakening.

The core message of that movement was to abolish fascism and return the state to the people. The uprising carried a much greater dream – to rebuild the state anew and create a new Bangladesh.

At the programme, the chief adviser remembered the courage and sacrifices of

people of all walks of life who participated in the uprising and held the spirit of democracy high.

He said the month-long programmes are not just an act of remembrance, but a renewed pledge.

"In last year's July, a unity was forged among people of all classes, professions, and ages across the country. This July, we want that unity to be strengthened once again."

The main goal of the programmes is to raise public awareness about democratic rights, demand political accountability, and ensure that the chances of having reforms earned through blood are not lost.

"The road ahead is difficult, but it holds immense possibilities. History bears witness that when the people rise, no force can stand in their way. With this belief, I call upon you all let us turn this month of July into a month of public awakening, a month of unity," Yunus said.

On this occasion, the chief adviser unveiled the QR code of the programme. He also handed over scholarship cheques to three National University students.

Education Adviser CR Abrar and Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki also spoke at the event.

ICT-1 begins hearing on charge framing

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framing charges against Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and ex-police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun for their alleged involvement in crimes including murder, attempted murder, torture, and use of lethal weapons, among others.

Tajul Islam said Hasina was driven by a desire to cling to power at all costs, and in the process, incited violence, as well as ordered the use of lethal weapons, including from helicopters, to quell last year's protests.

"The atrocities were widespread and systematic," he told the tribunal.

Some 305,311 rounds of ammunition were fired, and more than 1,500 civilians were killed and over 25,000 wounded during last year's protests in July and August, Tajul said in a packed courtroom amid pin-drop silence.

On June 1, the tribunal took cognisance of the charges brought by prosecutors against the three, accusing them of crimes against humanity because of their superior command responsibility, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, facilitation, abetment, complicity, failure to punish, and failure to prevent crimes.

That day, the prosecutors also produced 8,747 pages of documents and testimonies from 81 witnesses, along with 135 pages detailing the formal charges.

Evidence also includes drone and

CCTV footage, audio clips of telephone conversations, forensic reports of digital evidence, confessional statements, photographs and videos on social media and news outlets, reports from national and international organisations, and official documents from state agencies.

In yesterday's submission, Tajul Islam said Hasina and the other two accused hold the overall command responsibility connected to the violent suppression of the uprising.

However, he mentioned three specific cases: the murder of 23-year-old student protester Abu Sayeed in Rangpur, the killing of six others in the Chankharpul area of Dhaka, and the killing and burning of six people in Ashulia.

He read out five counts of charges before the tribunal against the three accused, urging the tribunal to frame charges against them.

After his submission, state-appointed defence counsel Md Amir Hossain, representing Sheikh Hasina and Asaduzzaman, both currently absconding, requested 15 days to prepare their defence. The tribunal scheduled July 7 for the next hearing.

Following the proceedings, Amir told reporters that the charges against his clients were unfounded and he would try his best to get them acquitted.

Jaiad Bin Amjad, defence counsel for former IGP Mamun, who is currently in custody, informed the

This year, National University is providing "July Shaheed Smriti Britty" to 2,040 students of the university. A total of 32 National University students were killed during July uprising, according to a statement of chief adviser's press wing.

The government is holding a 36-day commemorative programme titled "July Remembrance Celebration", which began yesterday and will continue until August 5.

As part of the programmes, prayers were held for the martyrs at mosques, temples, pagodas, churches, and other places of worship on the day.

The government will also hold different programmes until August 5.

The events are scheduled for July 5, July 7, and July 14. A memorial programme will be held at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, marking the death anniversary of Abu Sayed on July 16.

The final day of the programme, August 5, which is referred to as the "36th of July" in the official schedule, will feature the launching of a video titled "36 July", floral tributes at July Martyrs' Memorials in 36 districts, a meeting between the chief adviser and the families of the martyrs, a "Victory Procession" towards Manik Mia Avenue, an air show, a concert, and a drone show.

court that he would not present his arguments at this stage.

This is the second hearing on charge framing in connection with crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising.

The proceeding was telecast live on BTV.

In charge 1, the three are accused of murder, torture, and inhumane acts for aiding, abetting, and failing to prevent violent attacks by law enforcement and Awami League cadres on unarmed student protesters.

According to charge 2, they have been accused of ordering the use of lethal weapons (including helicopters and drones) to subdue student protesters. The accused are allegedly guilty of superior command responsibility, complicity, facilitation and conspiracy.

According to charge 3, the accused issued orders, incited, abetted, facilitated, conspired and were complicit in the killing of Abu Sayed on July 16.

The fourth charge accuses them of orchestrating the murder of six unarmed protesters in Chankharpul, Dhaka, on August 5 by direct order, incitement, abetment, facilitation, complicity, and conspiracy.

In charge 5, the defendants are accused of the shooting of six student protesters, five of whom were killed and burned, while the sixth was reportedly set on fire while still alive, in Ashulia on August 5 last year.