

'Tk 1 lakh offered' as hush money for rape of child
STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Cox's Bazar

A 14-year-old girl and her family fled their home on Cox's Bazar's Saint Martin's Island on Friday, after local political figures, allegedly of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, offered Tk 1 lakh to silence them over the rape of the teenager.

The alleged rapist, Abdullah, 35, is reportedly the brother of Jamaat-e-Islami's former union ameer and the current Cox's Bazar committee member Abdur Rahim Jihadi.

According to the victim's mother, her daughter had gone out that afternoon when Abdullah lured her into his home and raped her.

"She came home crying and told me everything. Later, some local leaders offered Tk 1 lakh to keep us quiet. When we refused, we started receiving threats."

The family, now in hiding, is trying to secure treatment for the girl.

Locals said a group of "community elders", including local BNP union president Nurul Alam, held an informal arbitration and proposed a Tk 1 lakh settlement.

Nurul Alam denied the allegation, saying, "The claim of a cover-up with money is not true. I've been trying to offer legal support. When the family came to me, I asked if they had any witnesses. When they said no, I suggested they go to the police."

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Made with US cotton? Pay less at US customs

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remaining 60 percent of product value, further reducing the effective duty paid at the US border.

Khan urged the government to support increased imports of US cotton and to deepen bilateral discussions to ensure the new trade provision is fully leveraged. He also encouraged investment in systems that could certify and document US input use throughout the supply chain.

The Trump administration reduced the tariff rate on Bangladeshi goods to 20 percent from the previous 35 percent, a move Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus described as "a decisive diplomatic victory" for the country. However, the effective tariff rate stands at about 36.5 percent with existing duties taken into account. While still substantial, the new content clause provides a mechanism to lower the burden.

Bangladesh's position could strengthen further as other apparel-exporting countries, such as India and Pakistan, are less likely to benefit due to their use of domestically grown cotton. Vietnam faces an additional risk: if goods are deemed transshipped, the US may apply tariffs as high as 40 percent.

Khan said shifting orders from China, where tariffs remain elevated, could also benefit Bangladesh. However, he warned of a downside risk: rising tariffs on consumer goods may fuel inflation in the US, potentially reducing American demand for imported garments.

As US importers are expected to bear the bulk of the new tariff costs, Khan cautioned that some buyers may seek to shift part of the burden onto Bangladeshi suppliers. "It's important that we remain competitive, but also that we don't absorb more cost than we can afford," he said.

'Manifesto for a new Bangladesh'

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the busy capital, but has urged city residents to view the matter with understanding.

Meanwhile, Dhaka police have urged city dwellers, particularly HSC, equivalent, and BCS examinees, to leave for their exam centres well ahead of time to avoid delays.

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prime minister and her entire cabinet. What began as a decentralised uprising led by students evolved into a mass mobilisation, pulling together people from all segments of society in a powerful demonstration of unity and defiance.

From early morning, thousands began converging on the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, many of them braving rain with family members, waving national flags, and holding placards bearing the faces of the dead, the disappeared, and slogans of resistance. The surrounding areas, Doyer Chittar, Jagannath Hall, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Shibbari intersection, overflowed with protesters as chants of "Dofa Ek, Dabi Ek: Sheikh Hasina Podotyag" echoed through the streets. The rally, which formally began at 5:00pm, soon swelled to tens of thousands, bringing together teachers, lawyers, garment workers, parents, rickshaw pullers, and children.

In the midst of this crowd, Nahid Islam, a key organiser of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, took the stage and declared, "We are here with a one-point demand. We seek to ensure people's safety and justice."

The protest sites extended far beyond the boundaries of the Shaheed Minar.

In Mirpur 10, thousands of students and citizens blocked the roundabout.

In Uttara, students and parents stood

shoulder to shoulder near BNS Centre,

carrying placards like "My brother is in

the grave, why is the killer outside?" and

"Police, whose side are you on?"

Meanwhile, Dhaka College students blocked Mirpur Road at Science Lab, vowing to stay until the one-point demand was fulfilled. The day's procession was peaceful in the capital, with security forces largely maintaining distance.

However, clashes erupted in at least seven districts, including Gazipur,

ON THIS DAY LAST YEAR

A nation united under one demand



FILE PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

Braving the rain, thousands pour into the Central Shaheed Minar and surrounding streets on August 3, 2024, to join the anti-discrimination student movement.

Chattogram, Cumilla, Sylhet, Bogura, Jamalpur, and Faridpur, where police and ruling party activists allegedly opened fire on demonstrators. Two people were killed, and at least 55 others were injured.

Earlier that morning, Sheikh Hasina addressed members of the Professionals' Coordination Council at Gono Bhaban, stating, "The Gono Bhaban's doors are open. I want to sit with the agitating students and listen to them. I don't want any conflict."

She called for the release of detained students and pledged that trials would be held for each person killed in the protests. But her appeal fell flat. Organisers and demonstrators alike viewed the gesture as too little, too late.

In response to the growing tension, Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman issued a directive to ensure the protection of lives, property, and vital state institutions. He emphasised that the Bangladesh Army had always stood by the people and would continue to do so in times of need.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir released a statement demanding the government step down without further bloodshed.

and factories, and boycott all state-run seminars, events, and institutions.

They also called for suspending remittances through formal banking channels, offshore transactions, and transport services, while making exceptions for hospitals, emergency services, and daily essentials. The movement sought full nationwide shutdowns without economic collapse by allowing workers to claim salaries while refusing cooperation with the state.

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Businessman tortured, forced to pay Tk 4cr at gunpoint

Suspended BNP leader, journalist accused in complaint

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A businessman in Abhaynagar upazila of Jashore was allegedly held at gunpoint, partially buried in sand and extorted of Tk 4 crore in multiple phases by a suspended BNP leader and a local journalist.

The victim Shahnewaz Kabir Tipu, 48, is the owner of Jafridi Enterprise in the Nawapara Bazar area.

Tipu's wife, Asma Khatun, filed a written complaint with Rajghat Army Camp in Abhaynagar regarding this matter on July 31, said Lance Corporal Nadim Mahmud of the army camp.

The trader has fled the area with his family over safety concerns.

On the morning of September 2 last year, a man named Saikat Hossain Hira took Tipu to the personal office of one Asaduzzaman Jony, the suspended organising secretary of Nawapara municipal unit of BNP, according to the complaint.

There, Jony beat him up and demanded Tk 2 crore at gunpoint. Asma later transferred the money to Jony's company account, following which her husband was released, it said.

Then, on September 18 last year, Tipu was intercepted by Hira on his way to Nawapara Bazar from Chalisia on a motorcycle. His phone was found switched off until 3:00pm that day. Later, it was learned that he had been taken to Kona Eco Park, allegedly controlled by Jony.

In the complaint, Asma said that when she arrived at the park, she too was attacked at gunpoint by Jony, Samrat Hossain and Nawapara Press Club General Secretary Mofiz Uddin.

The attackers dug a pit, buried her husband up to his chest in sand and demanded another Tk 2 crore, she said.

Tipu was forced to call his business manager and ask him to arrange the money. Subsequently, Tk 68 lakh was transferred from Pubali Bank and Tk 32 lakh from SBAC Bank to a bank account belonging to journalist Mofiz.

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Made with US cotton?

CA may unveil polls monthon Aug 5 or 8

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Coming out of the meeting, Mostafa Jamal Haider, leader of the 12 Party Alliance and chairman of Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), said, "The chief adviser categorically said he would announce a specific timeline and date of the election within the next four to five days."

On July 9, Yunus instructed the authorities concerned to complete election preparations by December. During a meeting with law enforcement officials that day, he also reiterated that the polls may be held in February or April.

Earlier, on June 13, during a meeting in London with BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman, the chief adviser said the election could take place before Ramadan 2026, which begins in the third week of February.

JULY DECLARATION

Meanwhile, in a statement yesterday, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said the government will formally present the "July Declaration" to the nation on August 5 in the presence of all stakeholders of the 2024 mass uprising.

The announcement will be made at 5:00pm, it said, adding that more details regarding the announcement

will be provided shortly.

Information and Broadcasting Adviser Mahfuj Alam also confirmed the development on his verified Facebook page, writing: "The July Declaration is now a reality... I thank everyone for keeping this issue alive in the public consciousness and helping pave the way for its implementation."

The student protests, which began on July 1 last year against the quota system in government jobs, quickly escalated into an uprising that toppled the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5.

According to a report of the UN fact-finding mission in February, up to 1,400 protest-related deaths occurred between July 15 and August 5.

The government is drafting the "July Declaration" in consultation with political parties after it took on this responsibility last December amid protests by Students Against Discrimination (SAD).

Samanta Shermeen, senior joint convener of the National Citizen Party, said yesterday they would not announce a separate July Declaration since the government is preparing to release it.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam yesterday welcomed the move.

US deports 39 Bangladeshis

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Desk arranged food for them.

Speaking on the matter, Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration Programme and Youth Platform, said, "We've learnt that the deportees spent somewhere between Tk 30 lakh and Tk 40 lakh to reach the US illegally, sometimes travelling through Mexico or various South American countries.

"Many sold their homes to arrange that fund. This put them in huge debt."

"After reaching the US, they

had applied for asylum, but both the courts and the immigration authorities rejected their application. Later, the US administration decided to deport them," he added.

Soon after Trump took office for the second term earlier this year, the US began a crackdown against illegal immigrants, mainly from South America. Many Indian immigrants have been also deported.

As part of that crackdown, Washington in March wrote a letter to Dhaka, seeking support in the repatriation of undocumented

We have learned from the government side that the July Declaration will be announced on August 5... We welcome this initiative," he said at a press conference at the party office in Banglomotor.

On December 29 last year, SAD and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee announced plans to proclaim the July Uprising Declaration at the Central Shaheed Minar on December 31, sparking debate over its timing and impact.

Later that day, the chief adviser's press secretary clarified it was a private initiative, not endorsed by the government. However, the following night, the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said the government would pursue a proclamation based on national consensus.

In response, the two platforms called off their declaration and held a "March for Unity" instead, where student leaders gave the government a January 15 deadline.

As the movement reigned with demands to ban the Awami League and announce the declaration, the advisory council decided on May 10 to release it within 30 working days. In mid-July, the draft was sent to pro-ruising parties for feedback before finalisation.

Bangladeshis.

A diplomatic source based in New York said yesterday that it was not unusual for US immigration authorities to deport undocumented immigrants.

"However, when deportations are done frequently, it makes the news."

"Although it's true that the Trump administration is strictly enforcing its immigration laws, its main target is illegal immigrants from Latin America. There are not many undocumented Bangladeshis in the US," he added.

Alleging that the July movement has been exploited by a new type of extortionist, communal, religious, and fascist forces, Anu Muhammad asserted that the movement must be reclaimed by the people.

He dismissed the anti-India sentiment expressed by the government and its allies as "rhetoric," arguing that they should instead reveal and cancel the many harmful and unequal deals signed with India.

Prof Anu Muhammad emphasised that all past struggles of the Bangladeshi people deserve recognition, with the 1971 Liberation War held above all as the defining moment in the nation's history.

"Those who seek to diminish the importance of the Liberation War

are adversaries of the spirit of mass uprising. The Liberation War does not belong to the Awami League. It must be reclaimed and given back to the people, whose sacrifices gave it meaning."

The uprising belongs to no single entity -- it is owned by the people."

Anu Muhammad also called for an end to the ongoing mass arrests, extortion, mob violence, and indiscriminate case filings.

The state must assume full responsibility for the martyrs and injured in last year's uprising across Bangladesh, he added.

Given the multiple overlapping events, DMP warned of severe traffic disruptions near Shahbagh, Shaheed Minar, and Suhrawardy Udyana areas, and advised commuters -- especially

Road crash in Malaysia kills three Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka

Three Bangladeshis were killed and two others injured after the vehicle they were travelling in skidded off East Coast Highway (LPT) 1 near Kuantan, Malaysia, yesterday.

The victims were driver Saber Hasan, 30, and passengers Jahid Hasan, 21, and Abdullah, 24.

Acting Kuantan Police Chief Adli Mat Daud said an initial investigation

revealed that the group was travelling from Kuantan to Kuala Lumpur when the driver reportedly lost control of the multi-purpose vehicle, causing it to veer off the left side of the road.

The two injured were hospitalised, the police officer said in a statement.

Adli further said preliminary findings showed that the driver did not have a valid driving licence and that the vehicle's road tax had expired in May.

US envoy meets Israeli hostage families in Tel Aviv

AFP, Tel Aviv

"The war needs to end. The Israeli government will not end it willingly. It has refused to do so."

"The Israeli government must be stopped. For our sakes, for our soldiers' sakes, for our sons and for the future generations of everybody in the Middle East."

Of the 251 hostages taken during the Hamas attack, 49 are still being held in Gaza, including 27 the Israeli military says are dead.

After the meeting, the Forum released a statement saying that Witkoff had given them a personal commitment that he and US President Donald Trump would work to return the remaining hostages.

"Horrifying acts"

Hamas attempted to maintain pressure on the families, releasing a video of one of the hostages -- 24-year-old Eviatar David -- for the second time in two days, showing him looking emaciated in a tunnel.

Dhaka roads to avoid today