



PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

The violence you don't publish

Prabir Das, senior photojournalist at The Daily Star, still carries the weight of pictures. Girls beaten with sticks. Friends searching for friends in body bags. Moments too brutal to show, yet too important to forget.

He doesn't revisit the images. He can't. "Those crying faces, those bodies—they're all in my memory.

I don't need to see the pictures again."

There were moments where the human side took over through him helping others. "That time I tried to be more of a human being, rather than a journalist," he says, recalling how he relayed information to students trying to escape violence.

"They were children. They didn't know what to do while being in the midst of a bloody chaos. I did what I had to save however many souls I could."

At one point, he even risked blending in to save students under attack. "I pretended to be physically and verbally aggressive to blend in, and then I grabbed them by their collar, took them away from the mob in the midst of chaos. Because you can't move opposite to the tide, you have to move with the tide."

But survival didn't mean healing. "Still now, I face those traumas," he confesses. "After July, I went to France, and when I was talking with people, I forgot the names of people, dates, and so many. I forgot so many things that time."

The new boundaries of risk

After July, their boundaries changed. Not just professional ones, but personal, ethical,

and emotional. K M Asad, who once saw the camera as an armour, now considers it as a burden.

"We faced so much backlash in July. People used to call us 'Dalal' and all," he says. "But I've been working for so long, I know how to handle it. I started to see and post things a little differently, because now I know what a picture can do."

Ibu, once meticulous about his gear, now thinks first about escape routes. Hady no longer photographs wounded children

in hospital beds. And Prabir believes therapy should be standard issue alongside helmets.

He said, "They need to have their safety gear, like a bulletproof jacket, a lightweight camera and gear, and a helmet. And one thing I must say is that they should have counselling. The situation that photojournalists face regularly affects our minds and may cause PTSD."

Support, especially from

peers, makes a difference, but it doesn't always come from home.

"Internationally, they know how to appreciate a picture. How to appreciate the work of someone," K M Asad points out. "Nationally, we don't. Sometimes we become competitive, which is good, but bad competition is never good."

July, one year later

A year on, July feels like a bruise that hasn't faded. Its images, those that made it to the public and those that didn't, still hover over a country unsure of what it's become. And the journalists who bore witness? They're still learning

how to carry what they captured.

They didn't just shoot photographs. They held up mirrors. And what stared back was a nation coming undone.

But even now, even after everything, they remain committed — not to fame, not to awards, not to the front page. But to the truth. And that's perhaps the most human thing of all.

By **K Tanzeel Zaman**

Photo: Courtesy/ K M Asad; Ibrahim Khalil Ibu; Md Samsul Alam Hady; Prabir Das



Prabir Das



Md Samsul Alam Hady



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