

Police came but it was too late

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At the press conference, Ruma said the criminals were now threatening them. "On the day of the killings, we sought police help by dialling 999 multiple times. But police did not respond. They came to the spot after the killings," she said.

She said rivalry between her family and some of their neighbours began after they started constructing a building.

Local union parishad chairman Shimul Billah wanted the job, but her family declined.

She claimed Shimul used his aides to extort money from them and threatened to kill them when they refused.

Ruma said her mother had contested the union parishad chairman election twice. "As my mother was a supporter of the BNP, she was not allowed to win," she said, adding that her rivals, out of jealousy, implicated her in a false drug case.

She alleged that money changed hands the night before the killings and that Shimul was involved.

Ruma claimed Shimul was backed by Md Billal Hossain, father of Adviser Asif Mahmud. That is why Shimul has not been arrested, she said.

Billal Hossain could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts. He did not respond to text messages either.

Contacted last night, Asif Mahmud refuted the allegations and termed them politically motivated. He said

Ruma had earlier stated that the murder was planned at the house of an upazila BNP leader.

The adviser also claimed he has evidence that a member of Ruma's family had earlier said some local BNP activists had pressured them to include his (Asif's) and his father's names in the case.

Referring to Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir's allegation that Asif Mahmud had established a "mafia-style rule" in Muradnagar, the adviser said the statement was "politically motivated."

Asif said that though he is an adviser, his family has no political affiliation.

"I would urge you [media] to visit Muradnagar and talk to the locals to find out who is establishing mafia rule there," he said.

Earlier, Nasir, after visiting 13 BNP leaders and activists in Cumilla jail, told reporters, "While positive politics exists across the country, it is absent in Muradnagar. Those who led the anti-fascist protests in July last year and had faced imprisonment multiple times before that have been sent to jail after August 5 at the behest of Asif Mahmud."

"Thirteen leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations have been imprisoned, but not a single activist of the fascist Awami League from Muradnagar is in jail," he added.

[Our correspondent from Cumilla contributed to the report]

Russian train slams into bus, killing one and injuring 11

AFP, Moscow

A freight train rammed into a tourist bus at a level crossing near the Russian city of Saint Petersburg yesterday, killing one person and injuring 11, officials said.

The accident in northwestern Russia occurred at 0300 GMT, Russia's rail network said. The bus was on the tracks when the train hit it at full speed.

The train driver applied emergency braking "but the distance was too short and he could not avoid a collision," the railway statement said.

"According to preliminary information, 12 passengers on the bus were injured and one of them died of injuries," it said.

Trump to raise tariff

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"Buying massive amounts of Russian Oil" and selling it for "big profits."

"They don't care how many people in Ukraine are being killed by the Russian War Machine," Trump added.

"Because of this, I will be substantially raising the Tariff paid by India to the USA."

But he did not provide details on what tariff level he had in mind.

For now, an existing 10 percent US tariff on Indian products is expected to rise to 25 percent come Thursday.

includes regulatory impact assessments and explanatory notes to increase transparency.

Bangladesh also committed to strengthening intellectual property protections by ensuring fair and transparent procedures for the examination, opposition, and cancellation of trademarks and patents.

The agreement marks a strategic shift in Bangladesh's trade orientation and underscores Washington's renewed push to bolster economic alliances in South Asia, as the geopolitical rivalry with China intensifies across the Indo-Pacific.

opinions and try to reduce those disagreements.

Commission sources say that they are concerned that without a shared understanding on implementation, many parties may refuse to sign the July Charter.

Efforts will be made to bring parties to a reasonable common position and provide an acceptable legal basis for the charter.

A member of the commission, wishing to remain anonymous, told The Daily Star that the third phase will proceed through continuous discussions with legal, constitutional, and political experts, as well as political parties, to secure signatures on the charter and mitigate disagreements.

Commission Vice President Prof Ali Riaz chaired the Sunday's meeting at the parliament building, where members Badiul Alam Majumdar, Justice Md Emdadul Haque, Iftekharuzzaman, Safar Raj Hossain, Md Ayub Mia, and Monir Haider were present.

under the Jatrabari flyover.

She said when she was returning to her Jatrabari home from work on July 18, she found injured people strewn under the flyover. Some were missing limbs and others bleeding.

She saw a teen, 18 or 19 years old, soaked in blood and crying out, "Save me." She lifted him and rested his head on her shoulder, and tried to find help.

"I was looking for a rickshaw to take him to a hospital when 14 or 15 policemen appeared and started firing," she said.

"They begged them not to shoot, but they fired straight into his back."

Then, a policeman shot at her left eye. "Blood started gushing out. I screamed in pain and collapsed beside the boy. He held me tight, took a deep breath, and I think he died in my arms," Parvin said in tears.

Some people then came to their rescue. Assuming the teen had died, they took Parvin to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The doctors there initially refused to treat her until the people forced them to.

Her husband, a professional driver, with no money in hand, had to sell one of her earrings to buy her medicines.

Doctors operated on her the next day and removed three pellets from her eye. Later, another was removed at NITOR.

She still has pellets in her abdomen.

"I came to testify despite being eight-month pregnant because I want justice," she said. "It was only on Hasina's orders that the police fired. She was the guardian of the force. Thousands died under her rule."

During cross examination, Amir claimed that Parvin's testimony did not completely match with her statement before the investigation officer.

The tribunal adjourned until 11:00am on Wednesday.

The lawyer then stated, "Since you subscribe to an ideology different from that of my client, you have made a false testimony against the accused."

Emran said, "Yes, I'm associated with a student organisation."

The lawyer then stated, "Since you subscribe to an ideology different from that of my client, you have made a false testimony against the accused."

Witness Parvin in her testimony described the horror she witnessed

'July rekindled the hope for a just country'

FROM PAGE 1

President Shahabuddin, in his message, said the July Uprising was a mass eruption of the youth and people against decades of deprivation, misrule, corruption, looting, enforced disappearances, killings, and the denial of voting rights.

Its goal, he said, was to dismantle a discriminatory system, restore democracy, empower citizens, and ensure freedom of expression.

He expressed hope that the uprising's ideals would guide the reform process and help build a just, prosperous, and democratic Bangladesh.

The president paid tribute to the martyrs and injured fighters of the uprising, pledging that the state would ensure justice for their families.

Asserting that July rekindled the people's hope for a just, equal, and corruption-free country, Chief Adviser Prof Yunus, in his message, called upon all to come forward to build a Bangladesh where tyranny will never rise again.

He said the sacrifices of thousands had created this rare opportunity for national reform, and it must be protected at any cost.

The fallen autocrats and their self-serving allies remain active, conspiring to derail the nation's progress, he said, adding, "Let us stand united beyond all divisions to confront and defeat these threats...."

"August 5 marks an unforgettable chapter in the history of Bangladesh. It was on this very day, one year ago, that the July Uprising reached its triumph, liberating our beloved nation from the grip of long-standing fascist rule."

Yunus extended his heartfelt congratulations to the people of Bangladesh, whose united struggle brought about this achievement.

He remembered with deep reverence

the brave youths, labourers, and professionals who sacrificed their lives while confronting the fascist forces.

The chief adviser added that the uprising was a collective eruption against 16 years of oppressive authoritarian misrule.

He also said that since assuming responsibility, the interim government has launched extensive reform efforts across all sectors of the state to fulfil these aspirations.

The trials related to the July killings are progressing swiftly, he said, adding that measures have been taken to preserve the memory of the July martyrs and rehabilitate the injured fighters.

"To accelerate our democratic journey, dialogue continues with political parties and stakeholders on necessary reforms, including the political and electoral systems."

Yunus added that the interim government is committed to restoring state power to the people through a peaceful, fair, and transparent election, as part of a sustainable political solution.

Meanwhile, BNP has decided to send a five-member delegation to today's programme on Manik Mia Avenue. The decision was made at a meeting held at the party chairperson's Gulshan office, presided over by acting chairperson Tarique Rahman. The delegation will be led by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

With the day announced a public holiday, the July Declaration is set to be unveiled by the chief adviser at a public gathering at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital's Manik Mia Avenue at 5:00pm.

The unveiling will be broadcast live on Bangladesh Television.

The event, organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in collaboration with the Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat and managed by the

Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy, will be held to commemorate the unity and sacrifice that defined the uprising.

The formal proceedings will begin at 11:00am with a series of musical and cultural performances. The morning session will open with Tong er Gaan, followed by performances from Islami Chhatra Shibir's cultural wing Saimum Shilpigoshthi at 11:20am and Korobor Shilpigoshthi at 11:40am.

Solo acts by Nahid and Tashfee will follow, leading up to the Zuhur prayer break at 1:00pm.

The afternoon will feature a mix of musical performances and commemorative events. At 1:10pm, Chittagong Hip Hop Hood will perform, followed by Sezan, who gained popularity during the uprising for his rap songs "Kotha Ko" (Speak up) and "Awaz Uda" (Raise your voice), at 1:30pm.

The band Shunno will take the stage at 2:00pm, with a special segment titled "Fascist's Flight" scheduled for 2:25pm.

Performances by Shayan at 2:40pm and the duo of Ethan Babu and Mousumi at 3:00pm will follow.

Popular rock bands Souls and Warfaze will perform at 3:30pm and 4:00pm respectively, before the Asr prayer break at 4:45pm.

At 5:00pm, the July Declaration will be unveiled by the chief adviser, followed by a performance from the Basic Guitar Learning School at 5:30pm.

This will be followed by performances from the indigenous female band F Minor, after which singer Elita Karim will take the stage. A special drone drama, Do You Miss Me, written by The Anonymous, will then be presented.

The event will conclude with a performance by popular rock band Artcell.

Explaining this, he said, "From that afternoon, some top leaders of the existing political parties started favouritism, extortion, and making money from legal cases. Over the past year, these things have increased. Even actions taken from the top level of the parties could not stop it."

"The new political parties also followed the same model from the beginning. They got involved in extortion, and moved forward on a self-destructive path."

Iftekharuzzaman acknowledged that, despite many challenges, there have been positive developments, including reforms in the judiciary, preparations for the upcoming national election, and improvements in governance.

"However, the standards of good governance are yet to be achieved. Political parties, civil society, and even the media have not consistently fulfilled the roles demanded by these times," he said.

Iftekharuzzaman criticised the government's tendency to cherry-pick trivial recommendations from commissions while neglecting deeper reforms.

He said that although consensus was reached on curbing executive overreach -- a hallmark of authoritarianism -- some political parties only offered conditional support, agreeing to this reform only if they came to power. This, he said, is extremely troubling.

"There is still no clarity about the legal standing of the July Charter. Even if signed by all parties, what enforceable power will it hold?" he asked. "How will it be implemented?"

"I'm not suggesting these concerns have triggered a crisis yet. But they deserve national attention, as they pose a significant risk."

Iftekharuzzaman concluded by saying that the opportunity to build a new Bangladesh must not be squandered.

"If the July Charter can be transformed into a legally binding document, allowing citizens to hold politicians accountable for their commitments, we may avoid repeating past authoritarianism."

"If not, we risk slipping backwards. And next time, it may take 54 days, not 54 years, for people to rise again."

Witness Parvin in her testimony described the horror she witnessed

Authoritarian system

FROM PAGE 1

e Islami and the National Citizen Party accounted for 5 and 1 percent respectively, the report added.

Following the fall of the AL regime last year, political parties took control of various businesses and operations once dominated by AL men.

"Political parties collect Tk 2.21 crore every day from 53 transport terminals and stands in Dhaka city. They have also taken over leases of bridges, marketplaces, jetties, and quarries across the country," researcher Juklarnayeen said.

Moreover, these parties also filed politically motivated cases and disrupted law and order by forming mobs, blocking roads, and surrounding police stations, he added.

In response, the interim government has often appeared lenient, he noted.

"Some religion-based parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, rejected the Women Reform Commission and its report, while Hefazat-e-Islam's derogatory remarks towards women ran counter to the spirit of the July uprising."

Juklarnayeen further added that such parties were involved in destroying shrines, halting cultural programmes, attacking libraries and minority communities, and harassing women in the streets.

"Political parties tabled many proposals but have not initiated democratic practices or internal reforms for integrity."

"Political parties also continue the politicisation of administration and educational institutions."

In his presentation, researcher Shahzada noted an alarming rise in mob violence, saying people have been killed in mob beatings, and the chief adviser's press secretary referred to such mobs as "pressure groups".

He said cases have been accepted indiscriminately, and incidents of extrajudicial killings and deaths in custody persisted. "Police remained inactive in fulfilling their responsibilities during such events."

While the interim government formed a commission to probe enforced disappearances, Shahzada said its position on holding the armed forces accountable remains unclear. He added that its stance on dismantling the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), accused

of being responsible for the killing of 141 people in 2013, is ambiguous.

The TIB's research report said that a political party, or "king's party," was formed with the support of the government.

When a journalist asked, "Who is this king's party?" in reply, Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "There is nothing to hide. It is the Jatiya Nagarik Party [National Citizen Party]. It has been described as a king's party. Because two of its allies are currently part of the government, it qualifies as a king's party during such events."

The TIB executive director said the political journey after August 5 was unfortunate.

"There are many challenges ahead.

The biggest challenge in front of us is to move forward by rebuilding a broken economy and a broken political structure. BNP has a big responsibility to fix these," he said.

BNP Standing Committee member Mirza Abbas said some powerful quarters are conspiring to derail the election.

"They are planning how to delay the election, how to stop it... But we will make sure the government holds the vote, no matter how many conspiracies unfold, inside or outside the government....