

'Ensure justice for rape of Jumma girl in Khagrachhari' Demand activists in their Rangamati procession

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Students and women's organisations brought out a procession in Rangamati yesterday, demanding justice for the rape of a class eight student in Khagrachhari.

The demonstration, organised by the Pahari Chhatri Parishad (CHT Hill Students Council) and Hill Women's Federation, began at 3:00pm from the Kumarsumit Roy Gymnasium premises.

The procession moved through the town's main road, passing the deputy commissioner's office, before ending at the Shilpkala Academy in Rangamati.



Rumen Chakma, president of the central committee of the Pahari Chhatri Parishad, alleged that rape, torture and persecution in the CHT have become routine because of a culture of impunity.

"The administration, and law enforcement agencies play a silent role. The state should take the responsibility," he said.

Sumitra Chakma, president of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Youth Association, said Jumma women are unsafe both at home and outside.

He noted that cases of rape in the hills continue, leaving the community in fear.

The lack of implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord has deepened this insecurity, he said, adding that torture and oppression will persist unless the accord is fully enforced. On the night of September 23, a girl was raped in Khagrachhari Sadar while returning home after private tuition. Her father filed a case the next morning with the Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station against three unidentified men.



A woman lays out earthenware plates to dry in the open. People from the Pal community in Maheshpur village of Bakerganj upazila in Barishal earn their livelihoods by making such products. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Waste burning chokes Savar

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

On August 17, the Department of Environment declared Savar a degraded airshed, citing the growing threat of air pollution from open burning of solid waste and brick kilns.

Experts said a degraded airshed is a geographical area where air quality consistently falls below national or international safe standards due to high pollutant concentrations, prompting strict environmental regulations.

From September 1, brick burning and production have been banned in all kilns except Tunnel Kilns and Hybrid Hoffman Kilns, while the open burning of solid waste has also been prohibited.

Although brick kiln operations are currently halted due to the rainy season, solid waste burning continues across Savar.

During a recent visit, this correspondent observed tyres, wood, batteries and tannery waste being burnt in open spaces.

In Madhumoti Model Town and Salehpur areas alone, at least 12 factories were found burning tyres to produce furnace oil.

Other sites were using thousands of

tonnes of wood to make coal, burning chromium containing tannery waste for animal feed, and even burning batteries to produce shisha.

Mohammad Sohag, a farmer, said his soil's fertility has been destroyed, drastically reducing papaya yield.

Sumon Mia, a resident, said smoke and stench from tyre factories have made living conditions unbearable.



Salauddin Khan Naeem, general secretary of the Savar Nagarik Committee, called for strict enforcement and closure of all polluting establishments.

Savar UNO Abu Bakar Sarkar said mobile court drives are being conducted against establishments that pollute the air, including illegal brick kilns and factories

burning tyres, batteries and tannery waste. If these factories start operating again, they will be completely closed down," he said.

Md Nazmul Hasan, assistant director of the DoE, said an action plan has been prepared to shut down establishments involved in open waste burning, with legal action to be taken against owners and employees if necessary.

Anisur Rahman, who runs a factory producing animal feed raw materials by burning raw hide, refused to speak to The Daily Star.

Solaiman Hossain, Jashim Uddin and Selim Mia, owners of three separate tyre-burning factories, said their factories have remained closed for now due to financial losses. He also declined to comment on the environmental impact of their operations.

Prof Md Mustafizur Rahman of Jahangirnagar University's Environmental Science Department said Savar's development is largely unplanned, with poor waste management and widespread open dumping. He stressed the need for stronger monitoring of factories emitting toxic fumes.

AGS candidates pledge reforms, student welfare

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strengthening the cyber cell to protect female students from online harassment.

parent political bodies and local politics," said Likhon, an independent candidate.

Despite the university entering its 73rd year, he said problems such as housing shortages, poor food quality, and lack of facilities still shape student politics.

"To end seat allocation based on affiliation or patronage, the university must become self-sufficient. My manifesto centres on 'self-service,'" he added.

NASIM VOWS TO ENSURE TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY

Nasim Sarkar, from the Gonotantrik Shikkharthi Porshod panel -- a platform formed to fight for student rights, believes a democratic campus can only be restored by dismantling teacher dominance and empowering students.

A student of Bangla

Language and Literature, Nasim has long been involved in student rights movements.

He blames "partisan control and fascist occupation" for problems such as partisan appointments in administration, politically driven hall seat allocation, and substandard food in dining facilities.

"We are not offering flashy promises, but focusing on fundamental issues," he said.

Sarkar pledged to dismantle the "feudal culture" in the university, where students are treated as subjects and teachers as rulers.

His manifesto includes an independent student-led faculty evaluation system, permanent ban on partisan and fascist activities, ending corporate dependence in university funding, creating part-time jobs, and expanding

scholarships for underprivileged students.

MAHAYEER PRIORITISES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Mahayeer Islam, from the Sorbonjon Shikkharthi Parishad panel, vowed to shift the university's focus from political dominance to academic excellence.

"The university's glorious history has often been overshadowed by political movements, while academic achievements were neglected. I want to restore that balance,"

said Mahayeer, a student of Arabic and former coordinator of the anti-discrimination student movement.

He said after the July uprising, students had hoped for a change in political culture, but parties quickly returned to violence -- something his group stayed away from.

If elected, Mahayeer promises to implement an academic master plan,

ensure transparency in hall seat allocation, provide housing allowances for disadvantaged students, improve dining facilities, and fully develop TSC infrastructure.

He also pledged to introduce faculty evaluations by students and ensure transparent recruitment of internationally qualified teachers.

"The university must progress through research and knowledge, not politics. My goal is to return academic authority to students," he added.

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