

No more delay in ensuring justice for Tonu

THE failure of the investigators to make any headway in the Tonu murder case, let alone identify the perpetrators, as mentioned in a New Age report on Monday, even seven days after the gruesome killing took place is unfortunate. What is more alarming is that family members of the victim, including her parents, were reportedly brought to the Rapid Action Battalion office in Comilla city at around 3:30am on Friday for questioning from their village house at Muradnagar of the district, an incident that has been construed by many as harassment of the bereaved family. Meanwhile, the apparent inaction so far of the Comilla cantonment authorities over demystifying the murder that, though, took place inside the highly restricted area under their jurisdiction has also left Tonu's family and others in doubt over getting justice. The daughter of an employee of the Comilla Cantonment Board, Tonu, also a second-year student of Comilla Victoria College and activist of the college theatre, was found dead at Alipur in the cantonment on March 20 night where she along with her parents, lived. According to the post-mortem report, she was killed after being raped. Regrettably, however, the Inter Services Public Relations issued a statement five days after the macabre incident just saying that 'activities have been started to find out the reasons behind the killing.

Overall, it is indeed little wonder that people's outbursts over the horrific murder have already rocked not only Comilla but also many other parts of the country, including the capital. Additionally, in many areas, students and ordinary people laid siege to roads and highways, including the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, on repeated occasions in the past few days, demanding immediate arrest of the killers. It is important to note that incidents of rape and murder of girls and women have seen an appalling rise in different parts of the country in recent times. In addition, many such incidents have remained unaddressed as law enforcing agencies just gave lip service to the public demand for justice for the victims. One can recall here the much-talked-about murder of journalist couple Sagar-Runi in February 2012 that took place inside the victims' bedroom in the capital and is yet to be cracked by law enforcers, despite the then home minister's pledge to catch the killers within 48 hours. All this may have provided reasons for the protesters in Comilla and elsewhere to continue to take to the streets despite assurances even from the home minister that justice would be served in the case at hand soon. One can also attribute the situation to the unabated surge in crimes in the country in the past few years essentially because of law enforcing agencies' negligence of duties to deal with crimes, be it petty or serious.

It is indeed high time that the government dealt with the murder in question seriously. It needs to realise that any further failure on its part in this regard will only add fuel to the public protests.