



Ratan died of torture by RAB and Police at Mirpur

Fact-finding Report

Odhikar

On 6 November 2008, at around 6.00 pm members of RAB-4 arrested Ratan (27) from Green Life Pharma, 2/E, Avenue 1/1, Mirpur-1. He was handed over to the Mirpur Model Police Station at around 11.55 pm. On 7 November, he became sick on his way to the court. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment. It is reported that he died in the hospital. His family claimed that he was tortured. RAB informed Odhikar that he was not tortured in any form. Fact-finding also revealed that Md. Ratan was the son of Md. Rejaul Karim from Garadaho village at Shahjadpur Thana at Sirajganj district and he lived in a rented house owned by Rajab Ali at Joyna Bari village at Savar.

According to allegations by the family, Odhikar conducted a comprehensive Fact-finding and talked with the followings:

- Younger brother and neighbour of the deceased
- Eye witnesses
- Doctor of the hospital
- Morgue assistant
- Members of the law enforcement agencies.

Hira Ahmed (25), Village: Garadaho, Thana: Shahjadpur, Shirajganj

Hira Ahmed told Odhikar that he used to live as a tenant in a house belonging to Rajab Ali at Joyna Bari village at Savar thana for last two years, and worked at the Suraiya Knitwear Factory owned by Rajab. His elder brother Ratan lived with him for the last three months and from 1 November 2008 Ratan had a job in a printing press at Mirpur. He said that he left home for work at 7.00 am on 6 November 2008 and that Ratan did not return home that day. On 7 November, after failing to find Ratan, he went to Mirpur Model Police Station at 3.30 pm. He was informed by the police there that Ratan had been arrested by RAB¹ but they did not know where he was. Hira returned to the factory and sent the manager of Suraiya Knitwear Md. Abdul Alim to the police station to see if he could get more information from the police. The Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohiuddin of Mirpur Model Police station told Alim that Ratan was under police custody. The OC told him to bring Hira to the police station, but Alim went home instead. Hira added that at 11.00 pm 6 policemen from Mirpur Model Police Station came to his house and told him that Ratan had died at 5.00 pm at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Hira was asked to collect the body from the police station on the morning of 8 November 2008. On 8 November 2008 at 7.30 am, Hira went to Mirpur Model Police Station and at 9.00 am he went to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with the police. After the post-mortem at 3.00 pm he took his brother's body to Shirajganj and at 5.00 pm Ratan was buried. Hira accused RAB of shaving off his brother's hair and moustache. He claimed that his brother died from torture.

Md. Abdul Alim, Production Manager, Suraiya Knitwear, Joyna Bari, Savar, Dhaka

Alim told Odhikar that Hira Ahmed works in his factory. Hira's brother Ratan used to live in Hira's house and was looking for a job. He had heard that Ratan had been employed somewhere

¹ RAB: Rapid Action Battalion

in Mirpur from 1 November 2008. When Ratan did not return home on 6 November Alim went to the Mirpur Model Police Station at 6.00 pm. The OC told him that Ratan was under police custody but did not disclose where and told him to inform Ratan's relatives or Ratan's brother Hira to come to the police station. Alim went home with this news. He said that Ratan was a healthy man and claimed that RAB and police tortured him to death.

Md. Rajab Ali (25), Village: Joyna Bari, Savar, Dhaka

Md. Rajab Ali informed Odhikar that a man named Hira Ahmed from Sirajganj had been living in his house as a tenant for the last two years and worked in his Suraiya Knitwear factory. For the last three months, Hira's brother Ratan was also living in that room. He heard that from 1 November 2008 he had been employed in a printing press at Mirpur. Ratan used to leave home in the morning and return home in the evening. On 6 November 2008, Hira went to look for him when he did not return home. On 7 November 2008, he went to Mirpur Model Police Station at 3.00 pm. The duty officer at the police station told Hira that Ratan had been arrested by RAB and he did not know where he was at that time. Hira said that at 6.00 pm production manager of Suraiya Knitwear factory, Alim, went to Mirpur Model Police Station, where Officer-in-charge (OC) Mohiuddin informed him that Ratan was under police custody and told him to inform Ratan's brother Hira to come to the police station. At 11.30 pm 6 policemen came to search for Hira. Later, the police informed Hira that RAB had arrested Ratan when he was committing extortion. RAB handed him over to the police. Ratan became sick when police were taking him to court. He died when the police took him to the hospital. They asked Hira to go to the hospital to bring the body. On 8 November 2008 at 8am Ratan Ali went to Mirpur Model Police Station with Hira. He returned home after the police left for Dhaka Medical College Hospital with Hira. He said that there was no case against Ratan and that Ratan was a healthy man who died in the custody of RAB and Police.

Md. Nur Islam (30), Green Life Pharma², 2/E, Avenue 1/1, Mirpur, Dhaka

Md. Nur Islam told Odhikar that on 6 November 2008 at 6.00 pm, 5 or 6 people were standing and talking in front of his shop. Suddenly a man got excited and 4 or 5 men grabbed him. They punched and kicked him. Many people had gathered there. The men said that they were members of RAB and they had arrested an extortionist named Ratan Ali. After 15 or 20 minutes, 4 or 5 more RAB members came with a white microbus. They prepared a seize list and took his signature. They took him away.

Masud (40), Doctors Point, Section-2, House No. 63/64, Mirpur, Dhaka

Masud said that on 6 November at 6.00 pm, several people were talking in front of Green Life Pharma. He saw members of RAB kicking, punching and slapping a man, who was later picked up by a white microbus.

Md. Shahjahan (32), Owner of the shoe shop 'Poroshmoni Shoes', 19/20 Shah Ali Shopping Complex, Mirpur-1, Dhaka and plaintiff of the Case

Md. Shahjahan told Odhikar that on 4 November 2008 at 2.30 pm a man named Shahadat called him on his cell phone and demanded five lakh taka extortion money. When he refused to give the money Shahadat became verbally abused and told him to talk with another man named Montu. Montu told him that if he did not pay five lakh taka then he would be killed. They called him with threats several times. Md. Shahjahan went to Darus Salam Police Station in the evening and

² Green Life Pharma: A Pharmacy

filed a General Diary (GD) against Shahadat and Montu. The number of the GD was 205. On 5 November 2008 Shahadat and Montu called him several times again and demanded the extortion money. They told him that one of their men was killed in crossfire by RAB, and that they needed a lot of money to run their organisation. They told him that he had to pay at least ten thousand taka now. Shahjahan also said that he informed RAB-4 about the incident in writing. RAB officials instructed him to pretend to pay the extortion money and trick the extortionists. The time of handing over the extortion money was set for the evening of 6 November 2008. Shahjahan prepared a bundle with two five hundred taka notes and 24 white papers between. He went to Green Life Pharma, 2/E, Avenue 1/1, Mirpur-1 with the money. He said that a boy named Ratan shook hands with him and said that Shahdat and Montu sent him to collect the money. He gave the money to Ratan and then Ratan asked him to take a rickshaw ride with him. Before that could happen, according to previous plans, RAB officials who were in hiding, arrested Ratan along with the extortion 'money'. Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Nupur Kumar Das of RAB-4 prepared a seize list. Shopkeepers at Green Life Pharma, Nur Islam and Md. Arman signed the seize list as eyewitnesses. After 15/20 minutes more, 4/5 RAB officials took Ratan with them in a white microbus. RAB officials took him to Mirpur Model Police Station at around 11.55 pm, Shahjahan himself filed a case as a plaintiff. He added that after RAB arrested Ratan, he was receiving more death threats in anonymous phone calls and was feeling very unsafe.

Constable Razu, Darus Salam Police Station, Dhaka

According to Constable Razu, on 4 November 2008 a shopkeeper called Md. Shahjahan from Mirpur Shah Ali Shopping Complex, filed a General Diary (GD), bearing GD number 205. In the diary it was mentioned that at around 2.30 pm, two men named Shahdat and Montu demanded five lakh taka extortion money over a cell phone and calling from the number 01924-947972. They said that if the extortion money was not paid, Shahjahan would be killed. Razu added that the police became alert. On 7 November 2008 he was informed by a police transmission that RAB had caught the extortionist red handed and had handed him over to Mirpur Model Police Station.

Md. Mohiuddin, Officer-in-charge (OC), Mirpur Model Police Station, Dhaka

Md. Mohiuddin informed Odhikar that on 6 November 2008 RAB-4 officials brought Ratan, an alleged extortionist to the police station at around 11.55 pm. At that time, shop owner Shahjahan from 'Poroshmoni Shoes' in the Shah Ali Shopping Complex filed a case as a plaintiff. The OC said that on 7 November 2008, Ratan was taken to the court in a police prison van. The police took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital when Ratan felt sick on his way to court. The OC said Ratan died in the hospital. He claimed that though Ratan died in police custody, he was not tortured at the police station.

Sub Inspector (SI) Shahjahan, Mirpur Model Police Station, Dhaka

SI Shahjahan told Odhikar that on 6 November 2008 at around 11.55 pm a criminal named Ratan was arrested red handed and brought to the police station. He learned from Ratan that his father's name was Rezaul Karim. His home was the village of Garadaho of Shahjadpur upazilla of Sirajganj. For the last three months, he was residing at Razab Ali's house as a tenant at Joyna Bari village in Savar with his younger brother Hira. He was an alleged extortionist in the Mirpur area, in association with a syndicate of well-known criminals, Shahadat and Montu. Shahjahan Ali, a shopkeeper from Mirpur Shah Ali Shopping Complex filed a case against Ratan under section 4 of the Speedy Trial Act, being Case No. 10, dated 06/11/2008. SI Shahjahan also said

that on 7 November 2008 at around 11.00 am, the police took Ratan to court in a prison van. Ratan became sick on the way and died in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he was taken for treatment. He said that a case of unnatural death was filed related to this issue. Its number is 88, Date: 07/11/2008. The SI claimed that in the inquest report, no sign of injury was found on the body. He also said that reason behind the death could not be determined without getting the post-mortem report.

Captain Moshiur Rahman, Adjutant, RAB-4, Pikepara, Mirpur, Dhaka

Captain Moshiur told Odhikar that on 4 November 2008, the shop owner of `Poroshmoni Shoes` Md. Shahjahan at Shah Ali Shopping Complex, 19/20, Mirpur-1 complained that criminals named Shahadat and Montu called him up and demanded five lakh taka from him. They said they would kill him if he did not give them the money on 6 November. Shahjahan filed a General Diary (GD) in the Darus Salam Police Station and also filed a complaint seeking the assistance of the law. Based on the complaint the RAB officials plotted a way to arrest the criminal gang. When the criminals fixed a place and time for delivering the extortion money, the RAB officials took secret positions in that particular spot and later caught Ratan red handed, along with the money. Later, Shahjahan filed a case as a plaintiff in the Mirpur Model Police Station. RAB handed Ratan over to the police along with seized goods. He also mentioned that Ratan was slightly injured when he tried to flee at the time of arrest and stumbled. At that time he received treatment and was handed over to the police in a healthy condition. Captain Moshiur claimed that Ratan had not been tortured.

Dr. Rafiqul Bari, Lecturer, Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Dr. Rafiqul Bari informed Odhikar that he was reluctant to talk in detail about the condition of the body of Ratan as he died while in police custody. He told Odhikar to contact the Department Head, Dr. Mizanul Haque.

Dr. Mizanul Haque, Head, Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Dr. Mizanul Haque told Odhikar that on 8 November 2008 Dr. Rafiqul Bari performed a postmortem of Ratan's body. Some important parts of the body were sent to the laboratory for viscera testing. Nothing could be said before the postmortem report came out, but there were no bruises or spots on any external part of the body.

Sekendar, Morgue Assistant, Dhaka Medical College Hospital

Sekendar told Odhikar that on 7 November 2008 at 6.00 pm, the police brought a body from the Mirpur Model Police Station. On 8 November 2008 at 12.00 pm, Doctor Rafiqul Bari conducted the postmortem of the body. The registrar number was 2355. At 3.00 pm, Ratan's brother Hira Ahmed took the body away. Sekendar was not ready to share any more information with Odhikar.

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