



A Furniture Trader Shot Dead by the Detective Branch of Police in Kushtia

Fact-finding Report

Odhikar

At 3.30 pm on August 24, 2009, the Detective Branch (DB) of police in Kushtia arrested Shahinur Rahman Dablu (38) of the village of Shaldoho Kushtia at his house. It has been alleged by the family members of late Dablu that he was shot and killed by the DB the following day on August 25, 2009 at the Mohashoshan¹ at Dadblu's local town, Chor Millpara.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident. During the fact-finding mission, Odhikar spoke with:

- Relatives of Shahinur Rahman Dablu
- Eye-witnesses
- The Doctor who performed the post mortem of the deceased Dablu
- The morgue-assistant
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



File photo: Shahinur Rahman Dablu

Sharmin Akhtar Bina (30), Wife of Shahinur Rahman Dablu

Sharmin Akhtar Bina told Odhikar that her husband Shahinur Rahman Dablu was engaged in furniture trade. Bina and Shahinur lived from hand to mouth with their two children. Bina informed that there were two motorcycle theft cases against Shahinur, which were filed at the Mirpur and Kushtia Police Stations under Kushtia district respectively. The police had taken Shahinur into remand with respect to the case filed at the Mirpur Police Station. Due to physical assault during remand, Shahinur suffered injuries on his waist and legs. After spending three months in jail, Shahinur was released on bail a month and twenty days prior to his death. Due to his waist and leg injuries Shahinur was unable to move about a lot and spent most of his time sitting at home and his shop. According to Bina, the false cases against Shahinur were filed by his local rivals.

¹ Cremation ground for Hindu funerals.

Bina recalled that at 8.00 am on August 24, 2009, her husband went to collect relief rice from the Hatosh Horipur Union because all the rice at home had been consumed. At 3.00 pm, Shahinur returned home with the relief rice. Afterwards Shahinur sat on their verandah with his two children and began clipping his nails. According to Bina, at 3.10 pm, three men entered their house. One of the men wore a 'Kabuli'² outfit. Upon entering the house, the three men declared that the electric meter of the house was malfunctioning and that they had come to fix the problem. They also asked as to whether the house belonged to Dablu and if he was at home. In reply, Dablu stated that there was nothing wrong with the electric meter and that no complaint had been lodged at the power office. Immediately, one of the men with long hair brought out two pistols from his waist and pointed them towards Dablu. He introduced himself as a DB officer. Soon after, four more men entered the premises carrying guns and handcuffed Dablu. After searching the whole house, they retrieved a mobile phone. None of the men were in any uniform. When Bina inquired why Dablu was being arrested, she was told that there were two cases against Dablu at the police station. Bina then showed the men the papers concerning bail in both the cases. The DB men took the papers and began to slap Dablu. They left with Dablu at around 3.30 pm. Bina contacted Mostaq Hossain Masud, Chairman of the Horipur Union Parishad. The Chairman assured her that he would contact the SP³ and that no harm would come to Dablu since he was on bail. At 5.20 am on August 25, 2009, Chairman Mostaq Hossain Masud informed Bina through a relative of hers that police had killed her husband in 'crossfire'. Bina saw her husband's body when it was brought from the hospital at 1.30 pm. Bina alleged that Dablu had been taken away from home and shot dead. She demanded justice for her husband's killing.

Aleya Khatun (29), Sister-in-law of Shahinur Rahman Dablu

Aleya Khatun told Odhikar that at 3.10 pm on August 24, 2009, when Dablu was clipping his nails at the verandah of his house, several men entered his house carrying guns, stating that they had come to repair the malfunctioning electric meter. They then introduced themselves as DB officers and arrested Dablu and took him away. At 5.20 am on August 25, 2009, she heard from others that her brother-in-law had been shot and killed by the DB police. When Dablu's body was brought home in the evening of August 25, she saw three bullet wounds on his body; single wounds on both sides of his chest and another bullet wound which entered Dablu's throat through one side and exited through the other side. Aleya demanded that a fair investigation be initiated regarding the incident.

Imran (13), Neighbor of Dablu

While speaking with Odhikar, Imran recalled that he saw seven armed men taking Dablu away in handcuffs at 3.30 pm on August 24, 2009. Dablu had told Imran to inform the Chairman of the news of his arrest. When Imran set off for the Chairman's house the police told him not to do so and threatened to shoot him if he did not comply. Imran never went to the Chairman for this reason. Imran recalled that Dablu had been taken away by the DB men in front of many of the resident villagers. On August 25, 2009, he came to know that the DB had shot and killed Dablu.

² Kabuli outfit is the loose shirt and drawstring trousers worn by men in Afghanistan and also in Pakistan and by some in Bangladesh.

³ SP (Superintendent of Police): Head of police administration of a district in Bangladesh.

Mostaq Hossain Masud, Chairman, Hatosh Horipur Union Parishad

Mostaq Hossain Masud told Odhikar that at 4.45 pm on August 24, 2009, he saw 7/8 armed men taking Dablu away in handcuffs. That was when he realised that Dablu had been arrested by police. Afterwards, when Dablu's wife Bina informed him of the matter, he informed the SP of Dablu's arrest.

Joripa Khatun (35), Eye-witness

Joripa Khatun told Odhikar that on the evening of August 24, 2009, several members of the DB came to the Mohashoshan adjacent to her house to pick a spot. They also discussed in gestures as to how they would carry out an incident of 'crossfire'. Joripa went on to say that a total of four incidents of 'crossfire' had taken place at the Mohashoshan previously. Recalling from her experience of seeing 'crossfire' Joripa stated that prior to a 'crossfire' event the RAB or police would arrive and identify their spot of action after which they would inform the local residents that there would be gun firing during the night time. They would urge the residents not to be afraid, otherwise to stay somewhere else during that time. At 3.00 am on August 25, 2009, three police pick-ups arrived and parked beside the road. Members of the DB who were Joripa's acquaintances came and asked Joripa to open her door. When she expressed her reluctance to open the door the DB men stated that criminals were inside her house and they intended to carry out a search. When Joripa opened her door she saw the police ordering a handcuffed man wearing black trousers and a t-shirt to start running. Immediately afterwards, the police shouted out, 'Escaping! Get him!' One of the police officers struck the tin walls of her house and shouted, 'The criminal is escaping', which was followed by 10-12 gunshots.

Joripa recalled seeing the man fall to the ground after which the police opened his handcuffs. She informed that perhaps the man was unable to scream for help because his mouth was tied up. A police officer wearing a Kabuli suit asked Joripa to come near the blood-stained body to see if she could recognise him. When she stated that she was unable to identify the deceased, the police informed her that the body belonged to a criminal named Dablu. According to Joripa, a bullet had entered Dablu through one side of his throat and went out through the other side. Later on a police officer asked for a lungi⁴ from Joripa. She gave them a torn up lungi which the police used to cover up the body. Joripa stated that the law enforcement agencies have developed a practice of bringing people to the Mohashoshan to kill them. She demanded the Government bring an end to such activities.

Md. Shahid (30), Eye-witness

Md. Shahid told Odhikar that on the evening of August 24, 2009, he saw the DB men wandering about the Mohashoshan adjacent to his house. At 3.00 am on August 25, 2009, he heard quite a few gunshots. Waking up from sleep due to the firing, Shahid came out of his house and saw 10-12 police officers. He recalled that he heard them shouting, 'Get him! He's escaping!' They also pointed their torches all over the area. One of officers was wearing a Kabuli suit. He was holding a pistol and firing blanks into the sky. Several minutes after the firing came to an end, Shahid saw a blood-stained body with its mouth tied up, lying on the ground. Shahid stated that the police and RAB often came to the Mohashoshan to shoot victims after which they would summon people like him to put signatures on documents against their will. He demanded the Government bring an end to such type of killings.

⁴ Lungi: A piece of clothing worn in South and South-East Asia consisting of a piece of cloth, usually worn wrapped around the hips and reaching the ankles.

SI⁵ Noushad, Detective Branch of Police, Kushtia

SI Noushad told Odhikar that that the police while on patrol duty on the night of August 24, 2009, came to know from a secret source that criminals were holding a meeting at the Mohashoshan of Chor Millpara. On the basis of that news, the DB police of Kushtia filed a GD⁶ which was numbered 168/67 and registered at 21.45 hours. As per the GD, SI Noushad and SI Tofajjel Hossain with their respective forces arrived at the scene at 2.51 am on August 25, 2009. Realizing the presence of the police, the criminals began to fire randomly. The police also returned the fire and a total of 50-60 rounds of bullets were exchanged between the groups and the criminals were eventually forced to retreat. Later on, following a search of the area, a Light Machine Gun (LMG), 7 fresh cartridges of bullets, 5 rounds of empty bullet casings, 3 fresh rounds of a Chinese rifle and one further round of bullet casings were recovered. During the search a body was also found. The local residents identified the body as Shahinur Rahman Dablu, resident of Hatosh Horipur and member of the Jashod (JSD)⁷ Gonobahini (Obaidul Lal Group). SI Noushad informed further that he himself filed a case under Section 19(a) of The Arms Act, 1878. The case was numbered 43 and dated August 25, 2009.

Sharfuddin, Ward Master, Kushtia General Hospital, Kushtia

Sharfuddin told Odhikar that on August 25, 2009, the DB men from the Sadar Police Station brought a bullet-ridden body. From the words of the police, Sharfuddin realised that the body was that of Shahinur Rahman Dablu from the village of Shaldoho. The GD number of the Sadar Police Station was 1273, dated August 24, 2009. The post mortem of the body was registered under the number 200 on August 25, 2009 at 12:10 pm. Doctor SM Motiyar Rahman performed the post mortem of the body.

Doctor SM Motiyar Rahman, The Doctor who performed the Post Mortem of Dablu's Body, Kushtia General Hospital

Doctor SM Motiyar Rahman told Odhikar that he performed the post mortem of the body of Shahinur Rahman Dablu brought in by the DB of the Sadar Police Station on August 25, 2009. He said that there were a total of three bullet wounds on the body, in the throat and chest.

Laxman Lal, Morgue-Assistant, Kushtia General Hospital

Laxman Lal told Odhikar that on the early morning of August 25, 2009, the DB police brought Dablu's bullet-ridden body for the post mortem. Laxman recalled seeing three bullet wounds on Dablu's body, one on his throat and the remaining two on his chest. He said that there were no other signs of injury on his body.

Odhikar wants a through judicial investigation into this case of alleged extra-judicial killing and urges the concerned authorities to take stern actions against the perpetrators.

-The End-

⁵ Sub Inspector.

⁶ General Diary.

⁷ Jatiyo Shomajtantrik Dol (National Socialist Party)