

Tapan Das, abducted by alleged DB police from Shyampur in Dhaka

Fact finding Report
Odhikar

At around 8 pm on 3 August 2011 Tapan Das (40), the son of Tulsi Das and Rajoshri Das of Gowshami Road of 19/1 Nobinchondro, Shyampur was arrested by a few people who identified themselves as Detective Branch (DB) of Police from KB Road of the Mil Barrack area, Gendaria. His family informed Odhikar that since his arrest, Tapan Das has been missing.

Odhikar has conducted a fact-finding mission in to the matter. During this, they interviewed:

- The family of Tapan Das
- Neighbours and relatives
- Eye-witness
- Members of the law enforcement agency



Photo: Tapan Das

Shumi Das (28), wife of Tapan Das

Shumi Das informed Odhikar that Tapan Das left the house at around 10 am on 3 August 2011. On that day at around 7.30 pm, she had her last conversation with him. Hearing the news that the Detective Branch (DB) police had taken her husband in a microbus, she searched for him in different places. Shumi Das said that accompanied by her younger brother Shujon, she went to Shutrapur Police Station, Gendaria Police Station, Shyampur Police Station, and RAB offices in search of Tapan. Besides this, she also searched for him in Mitford Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital. In the meantime, different media publicised the news of the abduction of Tapan. Her husband is a tailor by profession, but is also involved in trading land.

She said that hearing that the DB police had arrested Tapan, they (she and Shujon) went to the Detective Brach offices. However, the DB police could not find any trace of Tapan. She also said that although a GD (General Diary) was filed regarding the abduction the police changed it to a missing persons case. They mentioned the incidence of abduction by DB police, but police

twisted it in their own way and recorded it as a missing person's case. She informed that at first they went to Shyampur Police Station and there the police said that it was a case under the jurisdiction of Gendaria Police Station, so they went to Gendaria Police Station. In Gendaria Police Station, the police said that since their residence is in the Shyampur area they would have to file a GD at Shyampur Police Station. In this way, the duty officers harassed them from evening until mid night, sending them from one police station to another. She does not know the reason for the arrest of Tapan by the DB police. There was no case or GD against Tapan in any police station. He was known to all as a simple person and masterful tailor. She expects interference of the Prime Minister in this matter to rescue her husband.

Gobinda Das (33), friend of Tapan Das

Gobinda Das told Odhikar that at around 8 pm on 3 August 2011, he and Tapan Das were returning home on a rickshaw after completing some work in the Chamber of Advocate Zakir. Tapan used to meet regularly with Advocate Zakir on the necessary work related to land trading. That day while returning from the chamber their rickshaw passed an under-construction building of Aesthetic Property Development Limited, adjacent to the KB Road of Faridabad, near Gendaria Police Station; DB police stopped the rickshaw and asked Tapan Das his name. Tapan replied. To verify if this was true, the DB police asked Gobinda who he was with. Having confirmed Tapan's identity the police asked him to get down from the rickshaw. They put Tapan in a white microbus standing by the side of the road and took his mobile. After some time the same people returned and picked up Gobinda in the microbus. Since most of the shops on either side of the road were closed, it was rather dark. On one side, the construction work of Aesthetic Property Development Limited was going on but nobody came forward to help them. Some people sitting on other rickshaws saw the incident but did nothing. Getting into the microbus, Gobinda saw that Tapan was blindfolded and handcuffed. Then they put handcuffs on Gobinda and blindfolded him as well. He heard Tapan requesting the police to loosen the handcuff. Then they asked Tapan how many mobiles he had and in reply, he said that he had only one. At that moment Tapan's second mobile phone rang and hearing this, they beat Tapan and snatched that mobile as well. Gobinda heard the sound of Tapan being beaten. Gobinda informed Odhikar that Tapan had 30 thousand taka with him. DB police asked Tapan about Gobinda, asking what his name was, his identity and his occupation. Then Tapan said that Gobinda delivered papers and made photocopies regarding land trading business and generally helped the advocates; for these reasons Gobinda stayed with Tapan. Tapan also said that Gobinda had been working with him for about 7/8 days.

After learning this information from Tapan, the police asked Gobinda the same questions regarding himself. The microbus stopped after having travelled a long way. Gobinda was taken out of the microbus near the DB office on Mintu Road. Gobinda informed Odhikar that there were around 6/7 people in the microbus. The DB police ordered him to leave the microbus. After getting out of the microbus he asked the police where he should go. The DB police instructed him to walk straight ahead without looking back. Then after returning to his area, he informed Tapan's family that the DB police had Tapan.

Dr. Moron Chan Das (70), father of Gobinda Das

Dr. Moron Chan Das informed Odhikar that at around 8 pm on 3 August 2011 his son Gobinda and Tapan Das were arrested from Faridabad KB Road near Gendaria Police Station and the old post office, by some people who identified themselves as DB police. His son Gobinda used to make banners. Then due to a financial crisis, he left that shop and took a job in his friend Anjan's shop at Postogola which was in the trade of recycling second hand items. He did not like this work and so left it and was jobless for a few days. Coming to know about his jobless condition, Tapan employed him in the chamber of an advocate. He went to work with Tapan for 7/8 days. Dr. Das felt relieved after knowing that his son was working with Tapan in a lawyer's chamber. He informed Odhikar that everyone in the area knew Tapan as a good person. He said that once Tapan was a very good tailor master. Later on, he started block printing on Sari's. He does not have any enemies in their area. When DB police took Tapan and his son Gobinda away in a microbus, he was in his medicine shop at 17 Horichoron Ray Road in front of Bahadurpur Lane. An eyewitness, a women named Lili (34) informed him about the incident. At around 10.30 pm at night, when Gobinda returned home, he came to know that Tapan had been arrested by DB police.

Shujon Das (25), brother-in-law of Tapan Das

Shujon Das informed Odhikar that at around 8.30 pm on 3 August 2011 an eye-witness of the incidence, and his neighbor, Lili, informed the people in the area that 7/8 unknown people took his brother-in-law and Gobinda away in a microbus. Later on, he came to know that DB police had picked up Tapan. He along with his sister went to different police stations, DB offices and other places in order to find Tapan. After failing to find Tapan at 7 pm on 4 August 2011, they went to Shyampur Police Station to file a GD for abduction but the police did not want to listen to them at first. After many requests, the GD was filed but in the place of abduction, they stated 'missing person'. Later on, they were informed that since the incident had occurred in the area under Gendaria Police Station they would have to file the case there. To file the case they went to Gendaria Police Station from Shyampur Police Station. The duty officer of Gendaria Police Station informed them that as they are residents of Shyampur they have to file the case in Shyampur police station. Shujon Das said that they were harassed by the police when they first tried to file GD. Then again they experienced the same harassment when they attempted to file the case. To file the case they moved from Gendaria to Shyampur police stations several times but each station refused to file the case. They were kept waiting until midnight in the police station and then asked to return the next morning at 11 am. The next day they had to wait for hours and hours in Shyampur Police Station. After waiting for a long time, they were again sent to Gendaria Police Station from Shyampur Police Station. In this way they were harassed for 3/4 days. He said that different news media covered the news of the abduction of Tapan but after police harassment the GD was finally filed, but as a missing person incident. They expressed their frustration at the performance of the police.

Kutubur Rahman, Officer-in-Charge, Shyampur Model Police Station

Kutubur Rahman informed Odhikar that as Tapan went missing near the Gendaria Police Station, the case had to be filed there. He took steps after coming to know about the incident. According to his information, Tapan sometimes went into hiding. Some local people told him that Tapan did this, in order to not have to repay loans. He stated that they were trying to find Tapan. Regarding this, a missing persons GD has been filed, but his family did not file any case of abduction.

Shubash Kumar Pal, Operations Officer, Gendaria Police Station

Shubash Kumar Pal informed Odhikar that it was a mistake of the family of Tapan Das not to file a case. He suggested that they should file a case. He does not know the reason for the disinterest showed by the police of Shyampur Police Station. He said that he talked with the family of Tapan Das. The case should be filed at Shyampur Police Station because Tapan lives in the area under Shyampur Police Station. He did not return after leaving the house that day, as mentioned in the GD.

Masudur Rahman, Additional Deputy Commissioner, DB, Media and Community Service, Dhaka Metropolitan Police

Masudur Rahman informed Odhikar that on 3 August 2011 DB police did not arrest anyone named Tapan. On the day of the incident, none of their team went to that area. The victim's relatives informed him about the incident. He saw the news in the paper but he claimed that DB police had no relation with the incident.

Observation of Odhikar: During the fact-finding Odhikar took the statement of Tapan's family, police and eye-witnesses. Police informed that the DB police did not arrest Tapan but according to the statement of the eyewitnesses, DB police arrested Tapan and his friend Gobinda Das and took them to the DB office at Mintu Road. After the microbus stopped there, Gobinda was set free and Tapan was taken to the office. Tapan's family claimed that they do not know any reason for arresting Tapan. They complained that the law enforcement agencies are not showing any interest to find Tapan.