



BDR member Ashraful Alam died at Pilkhana BDR Headquarters while under custody

Fact finding Report

Odhikar

Ashraful Alam (36) was a soldier of 13 Rifles Battalion of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). He was the son of Molla Mohammad Amir Hossain and Mosammat Anowara Begum of the Ambari area of Burimari village under Patgram thana of Lalmonirhat district. He was arrested from BDR Head Quarters at Pilkhana, Dhaka on February 25, 2009 after the BDR mutiny¹ and died on April 12, 2009 while under custody.

Odhikar conducted a fact finding mission into the matter. During fact finding Odhikar interviewed:

- Relatives of the deceased
- Neighbours
- Doctor who conducted post-mortem of the body of Ashraful Alam; and
- Members of the Law Enforcement Agency.



Photo: Ashraful Alam

¹ The mutiny took place on February 25, 2009 inside Bangladesh Rifle's (BDR), headquarters in Pilkhana area of Dhaka City. Many senior BDR officers were killed, as they had all congregated there to observe 'BDR week'. Later the BDR name was changed to 'Border Guard Bangladesh' or BGB.

Molla Mohammad Amir Hossain (58), father of deceased Ashraful Alam, district Lalmonirhat

Molla Mohammad Amir Hossain told Odhikar that at around 2 to 3 in the afternoon of April 13, 2009, one BDR officer called him from the BDR headquarters at Pilkhana and informed that Ashraful Alam had died. He asked the officer his name, however, ignoring the question, the officer told him to receive the body from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue. On asking how his son had died, the officer replied that Ashraful had committed suicide by hanging himself from the bathroom ventilator with a ‘gamcha²’ during his confinement. Amir Hossain commented that his son could not be involved in the BDR mutiny nor could he have committed suicide. Amir Hossain told Odhikar that he did not believe his son had killed himself and the matter seemed suspicious to him. He suspected that his son was tortured and died as a result. He also recalled that the kind of marks that are supposed to prove hanging were not present, such as neck scars, swollen eyes or a protruding tongue.

Mosammat Anowara Begum (53), mother of deceased Ashraful Alam, district Lalmonirhat

Mosammat Anowara Begum told Odhikar that at around three in the afternoon of April 13, 2009, one officer from Pilkhana called her husband and informed him that Ashraful was dead.

Mahmuda Begum (28), wife of Ashraful, district Gaibandha

Mahmuda Begum told Odhikar that at around three in the afternoon of April 13, 2009, someone called her father-in-law and informed him that her husband had died in the BDR headquarters in Pilkhana, Dhaka. She was told that her husband committed suicide by hanging himself from the ventilator of the bathroom while in custody. However, she did not believe this. Ashraful had talked with Mahmuda 2/3 times during his confinement in Pilkhana, Dhaka. At that time, her husband did not tell her about his condition. Her husband only asked her to pray for him. She could not see her husband’s body properly. The family members allowed her to see his face only.

Mohammad. Jahangir Kabir (35), younger brother of the Ashraful, district Lalmonirhat

Mohammad Jahangir Kabir told Odhikar that at around 2 in the afternoon of April 13, 2009, he came to know that his brother had committed suicide by hanging himself. The family, relatives and neighbours were surprised at the news of Ashraful’s suicide. He said that it was unbelievable that anyone could hang himself from the ventilator of the bathroom with a ‘gamcha’. He claimed that Ashraful was tortured and his death was covered up to look like a suicide. On April 14, 2009, when he went to receive his brother’s body, he asked the Officers of Pilkhana how Ashraful had died. Nobody replied, but one officer commented that he was fortunate enough to be able to take his brother’s body home.

Dr. Jubaidur Rahman, Assistant Professor, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Dhaka

² A gamcha is a thin cotton towel, made on a loom.

Dr. Jubaidur Rahman told Odhikar that he did not have any more information regarding the death of Ashraful Alam as on November 13, 2009, he sent the post mortem report to the New Market Police Station.

Ataur Rahman, Constable, Sheresta Department³, New Market Police Station, Nilkhet, Dhaka

Ataur Rahman told Odhikar that on April 13, 2009, a case was filed regarding the unnatural death of Ashraful Alam and the case number is 5. In the report it was mentioned that Ashraful Alam committed suicide. The final report in this regard was sent from this police station to the Court a long time ago.

-End of Report-

³ Clerical Department of the police station, where the documents are kept.