

# Probe failure to blame

*Victims' families, colleagues say about killings of 4 RU teachers in 12 years*

ANWAR ALI, RAJSHAHI

Rajshahi University teachers are getting murdered one after another because the real perpetrators are not being tried, according to victim families and colleagues of the slain teachers.

Prof AFM Rezaul Karim Siddiquee, who was hacked to death in Rajshahi city on Saturday, is the fourth RU teacher to have been killed in the last 12 years.

Their families and colleagues claimed that a proper trial of the previous killings and punishment of the killers could have saved Prof Rezaul.

"The real killers are never traced and punished due to the lack of proper investigations. As a result, our teachers are being killed one after another," said RU Vice-chancellor Prof Muhammad Mizanuddin yesterday.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

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FROM PAGE 1

Prof Ananda Kumar Saha, former president of Rajshahi University Teachers Association, said, "We believe our law enforcement agencies have all the skills and expertise to solve such murder cases. We are concerned that the mystery behind any of the cases has not been unearthed."

"We are worried and frightened."

The attack on Prof Rezaul followed the killing of another RU teacher, Prof KM Shafiul Islam of Sociology department. He was stabbed dead near his home on November 15, 2014.

Two other RU teachers -- Prof Muhammad Yunus of Economics and Prof S Taher Ahmed of Geology and Mining -- were killed on December 24, 2004 and on February 1, 2006.

Police arrested three suspected militants in Bogra after monitoring several Facebook pages and posts over the murder of Prof Shafiul.

On the other hand, the Rapid Action Battalion arrested six members of the BNP and its front organisations in Rajshahi. At a press briefing later, the elite force claimed the arrestees confessed to the killing.

However, the BNP men denied it before the court later and alleged that they were forced to make the confession while in Rab custody.

The case is under trial but three of the suspected militants caught by police are on bail.

Talking to The Daily Star, Soumin Shahrid Javin, son of slain Prof Shariful, questioned the charge sheet in which detectives named nine people, including a Jubo Dal and a former Chhatra Dal leader, accused.

"I still believe my father was murdered by religious fanatics.

"Even if they [the charge-sheeted accused] were involved in the murder, there must be some masterminds behind the killing," he said.

He also alleged that the investigators tried to mislead people through

the charge sheet.

He echoed the view of the RU VC and said investigators' "failure to trace the real perpetrators" was the reason why fresh attacks on teachers were being carried out.

He also expressed his disappointment over the investigation into his father's murder and the trial of the case.

The body of Prof S Taher Ahmed of Geology and Mining was recovered from a sewer near his Rajshahi house, two days after the killing.

Following investigation, police submitted a charge sheet to a Rajshahi court against six people, including a Rajshahi University teacher Mia Muhammad Mohiuddin.

Later, a court awarded death penalty to four of the accused, including the teacher.

However, former RU Islami Chhatra Shibir President Mahbubul Alam Salehi, a suspected mastermind of the killing, was acquitted as investigators could establish his involvement in the killing.

Taher's colleague Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar said the family members of the slain teacher were unhappy with the murder probe and lost hope for getting "justice".

Economics Prof Muhammad Yunus was killed while he was on his morning walk in the city.

The police had almost completed their investigation and were about to press charges against cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

However, the investigation took a dramatic turn when some JMB militants "confessed" to the crime all of a sudden, according to family members.

Later in 2010, a Rajshahi court awarded death penalties to two JMB militants in the case.

But the accused appealed to the High Court and demanded a retrial. The same court on February 23 this year commuted the death sentences to