

Outrage over teacher killing

The 65-year-old, also a freedom fighter, 'tortured to death by Jhalakathi Jubo League men'

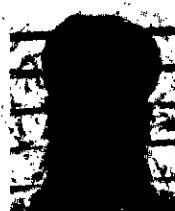
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Local freedom fighters and teachers erupted in protests after a teacher was found dead Tuesday morning, a day after he was beaten up by a local Jubo League leader and his men at Saturia of Rajapur in Jhalakathi.

Locals and family members of the victim, who was a freedom fighter, said Tk 92,000 was taken from the 65-year-old when he was beaten up twice on Monday.

Deceased Abdus Salam Khan, of Uttar Shialkathi in Bhandaria of Pirojpur, was a retired primary school teacher and had been running a preschool in his village.

Salam's son Samsul Alam Khan said his father was going to the house of a teacher of his school in the neighbouring Saturia village in Jhalakathi around 2:00pm on Monday to



Abdus Salam

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discuss some issues regarding the school and give the teacher some money.

But, Shah Alam, president of Ward 6 of Jubo League in Saturia Union, ambushed him right in front of the house of the teacher. Alam started beating Salam up for trying to go to the house of the female teacher.

Salam was then taken before local Union Parishad member Mostafizur Rahman at Amtola Bazar in Rajapur where he was again beaten up by the UP member and his men.

"Sir was tortured in front of all of us at the bazaar but no one dared to go forward. Being humiliated before his students and others, tears rolled down his cheeks," said a witness seeking unanimity.

Injured Salam returned to his home at night and went to bed without saying anything to his family. On Tuesday morning, family members found him dead, said Samsul Alam.

Family members learnt about the assault after seeing marks on his dead body while washing it before burial.

After hearing about the assault from locals, Salam's family informed the police who took the body to Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The teacher of the school whom Salam was trying to reach before being beaten up told The Daily Star over phone, "Head sir came to me to give some money following my request. But he could not give it to me as Shah Alam and his men snatched the money as soon as he got near my home."

She said her family and she were being threatened of dire consequences if they spoke about the incident. She left her house in fear of Shah Alam and his men, the teacher added.

Siddikur Rahman, chairman of Saturia Union, said he was getting conflicting information about the incident.

He said some were saying that

locals beat him up on suspicion that he was having an affair with the teacher while others were saying he was beaten up for the money he was carrying.

Salam was tortured twice, which is unthinkable, he said.

"Sir had Tk 92,000 in his pocket when he went to the madam's house and the amount might be the reason for the torture," said Bulbul Kabir, a teacher in the area.

Salam's son Samsul Alam Khan said they had no enmity with Shah Alam or the UP member and that Salam might have been beaten up for the money.

About the cause of his death, Golam Farhad, resident medical officer (RMO) of Jhalakathi, who had done the autopsy, said there were torture marks on his hands, legs and other parts of his body.

"To know the exact reason for his death, we have sent some samples to Barisal for tests," he said.

A case was filed with Rajapur Police Station Tuesday night accusing the UP member and Shah Alam, said Officer-in-Charge Munirul Giash.

They were trying to arrest the accused, he added.

Fakrul Islam, general secretary of Rajapur upazila unit Jubo League, said Shah Alam is the ward president but he has been inactive for a long time.

The commander of the Muktijoddha Sangsad of Rajapur upazila unit said Salam was tortured not only physically but also mentally.

The commander demanded immediate exemplary punishment of killers.

"We will be forced to take to the streets if the killers are not punished soon," said Manan Bishaws, deputy commander of the Muktijoddha Sangsad unit.

Demanding exemplary punishment of the killers, primary school teachers of Bhandaria upazila formed a human chain near the Shaheed Minar Road in the town yesterday.

Freedom fighters also brought out a mourning procession in the town.