

# Hundreds protest at murder of online activist

Staff Correspondent

STRONG protests were launched on Thursday against killings of secular writers, bloggers and publishers in the country as a Jagannath University law student and secular online activist was hacked and shot to death in the Old Dhaka on Wednesday night.

Nazim Uddin Samad, 26, who was critical of Islam in social media, was attacked in Ekrampur intersection at Sutrapur by undefined assailants at about 8:45pm on Wednesday, said Sutrapur police station officer-in-charge Tapon Kumar Saha.

'The assailants hacked him with a machete and shot in the head from close range to confirm his death,' Tapon said.

The latest incident took to six the number of secular bloggers, writers and publishers killed since the murder of Avijit Roy on Dhaka University campus in February 2015.

Hundreds of Jagannath University students blocked the busy Sadarghat road for several hours demanding that the killers be brought to justice.

Jagannath University stu-



Nazim Uddin Samad

dents called strike at all educational institutions across the country for Sunday unless the perpetrators were brought to book.

Left leaning Progressive Student Alliance extended its support to the strike.

Youth-led secular platform Ganajagaran Mancha also staged protests at Shahbagh and brought out a torch procession demanding that killing of secular people be stopped.

United Nation and European Union also condemned the killing and demanded protection for online activists.

Nazim's friend Kawser Ahmed said that Nazim had received anonymous threats over phone 'telling him not to write on Facebook.'

He was also attacked in Sylhet in May 2015 a few days

after the killing of blogger Ananta Bijoy Das, but could manage to escape,' Kawser said, adding that Nazim was among 84 bloggers who were on hit list by Islamists.

Sylhet Metropolitan Police deputy commissioner Faisal Mahmud said that Nazim had not asked for police protection.

Police officers said that Nazim was on his way home after attending evening class at the university when he was attacked by some four to five people near the university.

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## UN, EU, AI urge govt to protect online activists

United News of Bangladesh Dhaka

THE United Nations has renewed its call for the security authorities in Bangladesh to 'adequately protect' online activists who might be at risk.

In a statement on Thurs

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# Hundreds protest at murder

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Wari police division deputy commissioner Syed Nurul Islam said, 'It seems that it is a targeted killing... Police suspected that extremists killed Nazim for his stance against Islam.'

Nazim was from Biyani Bazar of Sylhet and a resident of Gendaria in Old Dhaka. He came to Dhaka two months ago to study law at the university.

Nazim was critical of Islam in a number of recent Facebook postings.

In a posting, Nazim described Allah as the imaginary creation of the Prophet Muhammad (SM).

In another posting, Nazim described that Allah himself betrayed Satan, represented as villain in Islam.

Wari police deputy commissioner said that the assailants might have followed Nazim's movement since long and finally attacked on Wednesday night.

Although no group has claimed responsibility for the murder so far, police are investigating the murder considering the involvement of extremist groups,' he said.

Police officers said that Nazim's friend Sohel Ahmed was accompanying him when he was attacked.

Sohel told police that he narrowly escaped the attack and could manage to flee.

The shop keepers around the spot who witnessed the incident said that the attackers were numbering four to five.

Sohel told New Age over phone that he was upset and could not give any interview to journalists.

Police said Sohel had co-operated police and he was now in his family custody.

'The assailants were on foot...They caught him and started hacking, and they left soon after shooting him in the head,' said a tailor

shop employee in the area.

'It seemed he was hacked with machete...The brain gushed out as his head was severed from the forehead,' said Sutrapur police station sub-inspector Nurul Islam, who conducted the inquest of the body.

Secular writers and bloggers alleged that Nazim was killed for his free thinking write-ups.

Ganajagaran Mancha spokesperson Imran H Sarker said that Nazim was with the Mancha, which campaigned for capital punishment for all war criminals of the 1971 war of independence, since 2013.

'He was a secular online activist and a critical of any social injustice and fundamentalism,' said Imran at a protest rally at Shahbagh.

He blamed the pervasive culture of impunity for the unabated murders of secular writers, bloggers and publishes one after another.