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U.P. police say youth didn't die of beating

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The Uttar Pradesh police on Sunday termed “false and baseless” the charge that **a 22-year-old daily wager died after he was thrashed by the police** when he had stepped out to buy food in Ambedkar Nagar district.

Rizwan Ahmed's family on Saturday said he died in a hospital three days after the police beat him up.

Ambedkar Nagar SP Alok Priyadarshi said that going by the evidence collected so far, there was nothing to show that Rizwan was assaulted by the police with batons.

“The post-mortem report does not show any injury by lathi [a baton] anywhere on his body,” he told reporters. The police searched for CCTV footage and considered the statements of a local doctor and the community health centre doctor.

According to the autopsy report, there was an infection in Rizwan's lungs and heart, Mr. Priyadarshi said. “He had also sustained injuries from a fall from a motorcycle, which caused his death,” he said.

The police also released a video of a medical practitioner, claiming to a family doctor of the deceased. The doctor said that when Rizwan came to him for treatment, his family did not mention any police beating. “His aunt told me that he was injured after falling from a motorcycle,” said Abdul Hakim, who added Rizwan had a wound on the right thigh and swelling on the left leg.

Rizwan's parents Israil and Sanam Khatoon, however, insisted that he died of injuries sustained in police beating.

Ms. Khatoon said Rizwan had left home with ₹5 to purchase biscuits. “*Police ne mara hai, bacha mera ₹5 leke gaya tha* [the police killed my child, he had gone with ₹5],” she said.

Mr. Mohammad Israil dismissed the police claim that Rizwan was injured in an accident. “Neither do we have a ‘gadi’ [motorcycle], nor did he know how to ride it. He was of the labour class and earning his living through labour work. Even I feed my family by repairing punctures,” he said.

He said he took his injured son to the local hospital in an e-rickshaw and at Akbarpur, Rizwan had given a written statement that he was beaten up by the police.

In a statement on Saturday, Mr. Mohammad Israil said that on April 15 at 4 p.m., Rizwan stepped out in the Chajjapur locality of Tanda to buy some domestic item. When Rizwan reached the local post-office, he was intercepted by a police vehicle, which carried a female inspector and some constables, he said. After stepping down from the vehicle, the police personnel started beating him up, he said.

“They started beating him with lathis on the road,” Mr. Mohammad Israil said, adding Rizwan was left badly injured.

A letter from the Editor

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