Tea-seller burnt in 'police attack' dies in Dhaka hospital

A tea-seller in Dhaka has died from burns after police allegedly attacked him, causing an oil spill from a stove.

Babul Matubbor, of Mirpur’s Shah Ali area, was rushed to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) after he was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital at around 1:30am Thursday.

The 45-year-old had suffered 90% burns, said Burn Unit doctor Partha Sankar Pal.

Babul was attacked by policemen who demanded that he give them money, his family has said.

But police claimed Babul was a drug dealer who had burnt himself while trying to run away from them.

Babul lived in a house near his tea-shop at Mirpur-1 Gudaraghat, his daughter-in-law Moni Begum told bdnews24.com.

She said two women sold marijuana in front of Babul’s shop. “Police harassed us in various ways when my father-in-law complained about them.”

A couple of policemen tried to take Babul away to Shah Ali Police Station at noon on Wednesday, she said.

“They came to extort money from him at night. But when he refused to pay up, several of them wearing police uniforms hit the stove in the shop with their batons.”

Babul’s jacket caught fire when oil splashed out of the stove, she said.

“I was there … I saw everything with my own eyes.”

Meanwhile, Shah Ali Police Station OC AKM Shahin Mondol said, “Babul is a drug dealer. He tried to run away when our source Delwar went to his shop at night. His body then caught fire from the stove.”

“A police team went there after learning of the fire,” he said, brushing aside allegations of extortion.