

World

Who Is Nido Taniam? North-East Student's Death in New Delhi Hate Attack Reveals India's Racial Division

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The death of 19-year-old student Nido Taniam in an alleged racist attack in New Delhi has renewed concerns if people from the country's north-east are safe in the Indian capital.

Taniam, the son of a legislator in the north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, died on 30 January after he was assaulted by a group of men in the Lajpat Nagar area of the city. He was in the city visiting his sister, a student, when he became the victim of a hate attack.

Taniam's death triggered massive public protests in Delhi where students from the north-eastern states held demonstrations demanding quick action against the alleged racist attack.

Apart from New Delhi, cities in down south have also witnessed sporadic attacks on citizens from the north-east, which often gets billed as racist assaults.

Taniam's death and the alleged police inaction were raised in the Indian parliament on Wednesday. Sushma Swaraj, the leader of the lower house of parliament demanded justice to the victim and reminded the government the north-east was part of India.

Reports said the boy had approached a shop to seek directions, but the shopkeepers, now identified as Farhan and Akram, made fun of his hairstyle and dress as he had coloured his hair blonde and wore a red pair of trousers.

Racial slur and altercation

A heated protest and argument followed, and a furious Taniam shattered a glass-topped table in the shop. Taniam and the shopkeepers were taken to the police station, where he was made to pay a fine of Rs 10,000 (£98) for the damage.

According to Taniam's friends, the police then dropped him near the same shop where the altercation had taken place. However, this time a group of men known to the shopkeepers



"During investigations conducted in the unfortunate death of Taniam, Delhi Police have identified six people, of whom two are juveniles, to be allegedly involved in the case," said Rajan Bhagat, Delhi Police spokesperson.

Student organisations from northeastern states demanded fair inquiry into the killing and highlighted the rise in hate crimes targetting people from the north-east.

Slow Progress

The fight for justice was also taken up on social media platforms such as Twitter, where people from all over India strongly denounced the attack, and urged for swift action in the case.

Three people have already been arrested in connection with the case. However, the police refused to disclose the identity of the arrested, saying investigation was still on.

Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court criticised the police on Wednesday over the slow progress in investigation.

"If you are unable to give post-mortem report in so many days in Delhi in a fast tracked case like this, what is the status of other cases. We must say the infrastructure (to examine evidence in criminal cases) is at a primitive stage in national capital," the court said, according to the Hindustan Times.

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