

Eclipse

In demand of death penalty of the war criminals of 1971, numerous young souls gather around Shahbag Square, Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2013. The upheaval brought hope to Abhijit Roy, Faisal Arefin Dipon, Ananta Bijoy Das and Niloy Neel. They were young writers and publishers who aspired to bring change in the society against the social unjust.

Islamic extremist group Hefazat-E-Islam identified and made a hit list of 84 individuals who they tagged “nastik” or “atheist” and published it publicly. Abhijit, Ananta and Neel were in it. They were accused of committing blasphemy, promoting agnosticism and provoking taboo concepts of the society through scientific logics. Calling them “nastik” helped to justify their killings in the name of religion. Within the next two years, they were hacked to death in broad daylight. Since they wrote blogs, the media identified the victims as “bloggers” overshadowing their real names. Consequently “Nastik”/“Blogger”- the two tag names became synonymous and a negative stereotype was thus created along with fear in other writers. Bangladesh being a Muslim major country, the ploy worked in favour of the propagandists, none of the murder cases received justice yet.

I have been associated with blog writing as well. As a part of the network I was acquainted with these individuals. Ananta was a dear friend and his killing incited the urge to consider this project to unveil the real people they were. From family archives, personal letters to their writings, the project intend to clear the tags from their identities.