

Grabbers Kill Two over Minority Land

FOR the land-grabbers the minority community is the softest target of all. In a latest incident two Hindus were killed and 10 others injured, three of them critically, as alleged grabbers of minority community land attacked them in Churer Bhita village in Dhubaura Upazila on January 22.

The dead are Bimol Chandra Sutradhar, 26, son of Gouranga Chandra Sutradhar, 35, son of Chandra Kumar Sutradhar.

The attack was led by Omar Ali, who has been described by both the police and locals as a land grabber. According to witnesses Omar along with 25 men equipped with sharp weapons attacked the group of men engaged in cultivating Boro on a 40-decimal piece of land at around 7:00 am. The attackers left two dead on the spot and injured 10 others, of whom six were

admitted to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital.

Shymol Chandra Sutradhar, Bimol's younger brother, told the Daily Star that Omar came to the area 10 years ago and grabbed about 100 decimal of land in last three years. He said Omar and his men encroached on the land of a temple, a cremation ground and a tree worshipped by the local Hindus. Omar's land-grabbing spree has already curtailed the regular religious practices of the minority Hindus. Shymol also told the newsmen that they were helpless in the face of his onslaught because Omar kept threatening the community of serious consequences if anyone filed a complaint with the authorities.

Sumati Rani, who received injuries during the incident, said that Omar has been making preparation for the last three months to grab the cropland. They took

the matter to the Purakandulia Union Parishad Chairman Mohammad Monju, who held arbitration in Chandranath School premises on January 21.

The UP chairman asked the Hindus to continue cultivation and directed Omar and his men to stay off the land. But, Omar and his men, including his son-in-law Pradip Mia, a Juba Dal leader, went on to grab more land. The attack was the most blatant act on their part to terrorise the Hindu community in order to drive them away from their ancestral land.

What makes the matter worse is that the law enforcement authority seemed to be turning a blind eye to the gory incident. The officer-in-charge of Dhubaura Police Station said that they do not know anything about Omar's land grabbing. "If the allegation is true, we must take necessary action," he said.

Hartal Observed Amidst Violence

NEARLY 20 Awami League (AL) activists and 12 journalists were injured when police swooped on an AL procession supporting the first hartal of the year called by the 14-party opposition alliance. Forty others were injured in separate clashes between the police and opposition

activists the day before the hartal. Police attacked an AL procession with batons and lobbed at least 50 teargas shells when the procession tried to break through a police barricade enclosing the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue. The 14-party opposition alliance, comprising the AL, 11-party alliance, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and National Awami Party observed the countrywide hartal demanding Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz's immediate resignation and cancellation of two new election commissioners' appointments. Sporadic clashes in the capital and elsewhere in the country during the countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal left more than 200 people injured, ten of them with bullet wounds by gunmen allegedly backed by the ruling BNP. About 100 leaders and activists of the 14-party including Awami League (AL) leaders Faruq Khan MP, and former lawmaker Dr HBM Iqbal were injured as policemen in riot gears charged batons on opposition leaders and activists at different points in the capital. The law enforcers also detained 68 people during the clashes on charge of violent picketing as they hurled brickbats at the police and passing vehicles. Schools, markets, shops and private offices were closed. Most of the motorised vehicles stayed off the streets in the capital and other major cities.

