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ATTACK ON BUDDHISTS PREPLANNED

## Tearing out the soul

INAM AHMED and JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Ramu, Cox's Bazar

It has all the telltale signs of a preplanned attack. A very focused operation that targeted Buddhist homes and establishments. The Muslim houses nestled between the Buddhist houses were left untouched. The attack spanned over six hours. The attackers swept across Ramu, demolishing temples and houses neighbourhood

after neighbourhood. And all this while, the role of the police and local administration remains veiled in mystery.

And, most interestingly, nobody in Ramu -- neither the Muslims nor the Buddhists -- seems to know who the attackers were. They are either telling the truth or are intentionally hiding the identities of the attackers. But one thing is

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## Of Black Saturday

INAM AHMED and JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Ramu, Cox's Bazar

7:30pm  
Carpenter Nidarshan Barua was standing at Chaumuhani station, the main square of Ramu. He saw a group of people making fiery speeches against the Buddhists. Many others were coming in pickups and trucks to join the crowd. It grew to a few

thousands. By his reckoning, it had become a 6,000-strong crowd. The mob wanted to attack the Buddhists. Ramu Upazila Chairman Soheli Sarwar Kazal came and tried to pacify the mob. They started for the Maitri Bihar and Nidarshan followed them. They were vandalising Buddhists' houses on the way and then finally wanted to torch the Bihar. Some

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From the ruins of a temple in Ramu of Cox's Bazar yesterday, a Buddhist monk retrieves scriptures that were left unburned in the arson by a mob of religious fanatics. Inset, idols of Lord Buddha silently testify to the overnight mayhem.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

166 detained in Chittagong, Cox's Bazar  
Several thousand accused in 16 cases  
STAR REPORT

Law enforcers have so far arrested 166 people in connection with Saturday's violence at Ramu in Cox's Bazar that later spread in the port city. Of the arrestees, 93 were picked up from Cox's Bazar and 73 from Chittagong. Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday told the media in the capital. Sixteen cases -- 13 in Cox's Bazar and three with Patiya Police Station -- have been filed so far against several thousand

## 'Please save my future generation'

INAM AHMED and JULFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Ramu, Cox's Bazar

The Buddha statues made of gold are lost forever. The intrinsic designs of Khadi wood are lost in the inferno. The Tripitak is lost too. But for Shreemad Satyapriya Mohathero, who had just turned 83, the loss and pain are even greater. He has lost all faith in his knowledge and reading of humanity.

"Even in 1971, I did not see this grotesque brutality on us," Mohathero says. Mohathero is the second highest priest of the Buddhist community in Bangladesh.

"Muslim men and women had taken refuge in my monastery in 1971 to escape the wrath of the Pakistani army," the feeble man says. "I have saved so many Muslim souls from the brutal persecution of the Pakistanis. Today I feel



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## ASSESSING PADMA GRAFT PROBE WB to appoint external panel

2 missions due this month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank will appoint an external panel to assess the investigation carried out by the Anti-Corruption Commission into the corruption allegation in the Padma bridge project.

Two WB missions are likely to arrive in Dhaka this month for the purpose, its Country Director for Bangladesh Ellen Goldstein said yesterday.

The statement came in response to the media queries about the postponement of the visit of a WB team in regard to the project, said a WB official.

The WB cancelled its \$1.2 billion credit for the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project in June, saying it had proof of a corruption conspiracy involving Bangladeshi officials, executives of a Canadian firm and private individuals. On September 20, it declared its decision to engage anew in the project.

A team of four to five members was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka

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## Train fares go up by 50pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday raised fares of both passenger and freight trains by around 50 percent in a bid to reduce the railway's annual loss, which is currently Tk 800 crore. The previous move to increase train fares was nearly 20 years back.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) until September 30 used to charge passengers 24 paise per kilometer, which has been increased to 36 paise.

The fare hike came into effect yesterday, BR Director General Abu Taher said.

He, however, could not give any information about the fare hike in freight train charges.

The railway minister on June 12 sent a proposal to the prime minister to raise the train fares. She approved the proposal on August 27.

BR has been pressing for 200 percent hike in train fares, considering the fuel price hikes in the last 20 years. But the parliamentary standing committee on railway ministry suggested a 50 percent hike, sources in the railway said.

In 1992 when the train fares were last increased, diesel, used to run trains, sold for Tk 13 per litre, which is now Tk 61 a litre.

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## Punish attackers

9 eminent citizens for judicial probe  
UNB, Dhaka

Nine eminent citizens of the country in a statement yesterday voiced deep concern over the attacks on the Buddhist community.

They demanded immediate judicial inquiry into the incidents and exemplary punishment of the perpetrators.

"The incidents like naked attacks on holy

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## AL blames fanatics

Home minister now sees Rohingya link  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Awami League delegation that visited Ramu upon directives from the prime minister yesterday, held the Islamic fundamentalist forces responsible for the attack on Buddhist temples and houses.

The delegation led by AL Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif visited temples and

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Sri Lanka paceman Lasith Malinga (L) celebrates after dismissing England batsman Jos Buttler (R) during their World T20 Super Eights match at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Malinga knocks out England

AFP, Pallekele

Slinging bowler Lasith Malinga took a career-best five wickets as Sri Lanka beat England by 19 runs to reach the World Twenty20 semi-finals and send the defending champions crashing out Monday.

Malinga took 5-31 as England, chasing a daunting 170-run target, were restricted to 150-9 in the Super Eights match at Pallekele stadium before a packed and rowdy 30,000 crowd.

The victory meant Sri Lanka and the West Indies reach the semifinals after the hosts won all their three matches in the Super Eights. West Indies earlier enjoyed a dramatic Super Over win against New Zealand.

England batsman Samit Patel fought a lonely battle with a

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## Court flip-flops on Destiny

Reverses its order to freeze 252 accounts within an hour

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Just an hour after ordering to freeze 252 bank accounts of controversial Destiny Group and Destiny-2000 Ltd, a Dhaka court yesterday withdrew the decision.

Judge (in-charge) Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Senior Special Judge's Court ordered the freeze in the morning upon two petitions filed by Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Mojahar Ali Sardar and its Assistant Director Toufiqul Islam.

The group officials could launder or transfer money from those accounts if those were not frozen, the plaintiffs argued in their petitions.

On September 12, the same judge cancelled the bail to five Destiny Group officials, including its managing director Md Rafiqul Amin. But the regular judge, Md Zahirul Haque, stayed the cancellation order the next day.

Akhtaruzzaman might have withdrawn his yesterday's order apprehending a similar situation, said sources

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## No graft in AL rule PM claims at NY media briefing

UNB, New York

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said there has been no corruption in any sector, including the power and energy, during the present government's tenure.

Responding to queries at a meet-the-press in New York on Sunday, she said, "Conspiracies are going on against the country and we are facing those strongly."

"But there was no corruption in any sector, including the power, during our tenure."

Hasina said her government's stance against corruption was very clear

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