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'HERBERT' TO 'SHESHER KABITA'

A conversation with Indian film director Suman Mukhopadhyay

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WHITE HOUSE TARGETED

An official says cyber attack has breached its unclassified network

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DEMOLITION BACKFIRES

A six-storey building collapses on two nearby houses in Old Dhaka

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Heroes of our time

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

Even in the middle of mindless mayhem, sanity still prevails. Meet the heroes -- Masud Rana, Harun, Osman, Mosharrif, Helal and Kamal -- who risked their lives to stop the Muslim mob from attacking the monasteries and Buddhists' houses. As Ramu turned volatile with militant processions moving in every direction, as infuriating slogans flew in the air, as flames leaped all around, these few young men came out of their houses and took up sticks to defend the Buddhists. Saturday night. Masud and his friends could feel that the mob was going to attack their neighbourhood as well. Masud, a young man whose father was a valiant freedom fighter, said he was in shock. Why should they attack all the Buddhists for the mistake of one? He could not find an answer. The procession came around 8:30pm. A group of 50 to 60 young men armed with sticks and machetes. Rana and his friends were no match for them. "We are only six and they were a big group," Osman thought. "Can we defend ourselves? But these are all local people and they know us well. They cannot harm us." So they held their ground and faced the invaders. "Why are you doing this? Is this what Islam preaches? Why do you

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Youths brandish firearms on Rajshahi University campus during a clash between Chhatra League and Islami Chhatra Shibir men yesterday. At least two Shibir men and a Chhatra League man received bullet injuries. More photos on page 5.

PHOTO: STAR

BCL, Shibir clash at RU

3 bullet-hit, 22 others hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

At least 25 students were injured, three of them bullet-hit, in a fierce clash between Islamic Chhatra Shibir and Bangladesh Chhatra League activists at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday. Police arrested 15 activists of Shibir after conducting raids in different dormitories soon after the incident. The clash ensued around 11:30am when Shibir activists threw brickbats at a BCL procession near Shahidullah Arts building, witnesses said. Following the incident, BCL men chased the Shibir activists, and a running battle between

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ATTACKS ON BUDDHIST TEMPLES

A hazy picture appears

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

A motley group comprising local leaders of pro-Awami League organisations, BNP men, madrasa students and common people were allegedly behind the communal violence at Ramu on Saturday night. Even some Rohingyas were among the attackers, who destroyed at least 12 temples and dozens of houses belonging to Buddhists in the overnight mayhem. Shamim Ahsan Bulu, a social activist of Fatehkharpul at the upazila, tried to stop a violent procession in the area that night. He found a youth, who took part in an angry rally and later thrown a stone at him, to be a Rohingya. Some other witnesses said they too had seen Rohingyas in processions around Saturday midnight.

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The dwarfs

INAM AHMED and JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Itimoni is hardly three feet something. She dwarfs us. She was hiding behind the "anchal" of her mother's sari. Her gaze fixed on the Buddha. The Buddha in his lotus position looks beautiful. His bronze face and body have taken on a distinctly ashy look. The golden Buddha looks almost fair in the afternoon light. Itimoni stares on. Where were you that night? We ask her. She does not answer. Just burrows her face deeper in the warmth of her mother's "anchal" (the loose end of a sari).

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Nip intolerance in the bud

Political blame-game will only strengthen extremists

MAHFUZ ANAM

COMMENTARY

There should be no doubt in anybody's mind as to the enormity and gravity of the meaning of what has happened at Ramu and in the adjoining areas. Never before in our history have places of worship of a religious minority been ravaged on such a large scale and in so deliberate a manner. Twelve Buddhist temples and

more than 50 houses were burnt down and vandalised in a pre-planned manner. And these people are among the most peaceful, docile and non-violent that we have. Just imagine the feelings of the Buddhist community and of the monks seeing their religious books and Holy Texts torn to bits

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Fury rages on

Police role challenged at court; Ramu cop withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the "inaction" of the police to prevent Saturday night's sectarian violence in Cox's Bazar. Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua in the petition sought a directive from the HC to summon the deputy commissioner (DC) and superintendent of police of Cox's Bazar and officer-in-charge of Ramu Police Station before it to explain their roles regarding the incident. The district police administration yesterday withdrew AK Nazibul Islam, OC of Ramu Police Station, for negligence of duty. The OC has been withdrawn for not taking proper

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A young monk prays before the burnt down idol of Buddha, surrounded by charred remains of the pagoda in Mithachhari of Cox's Bazar yesterday. The Pragaymitra Banbihar Pagoda along with many others was torched when criminals attacked homes, properties and places of worship of the Buddhist community there on Saturday night.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Inspired by inaction

Roundtable blames govt for rise of communal forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted academicians, politicians and the National Human Rights Commission chief yesterday blasted the government for its inaction against "communal forces like Jamaat-e-Islami" which they believe encouraged the violence at Ramu. At a roundtable discussion organised by Bangla daily Prothom-Alo at its Karwan Bazar office, the speakers demanded that the government take stern actions against a section of police officials who failed to prevent the violence at Ramu, Cox's Bazar, Saturday night. They said Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies were not

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RALLY FOILED IN NETRAKONA

BNP stages rowdy protest in Dhaka

3 vehicles torched, 20 smashed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-opposition activists yesterday clashed with law enforcers in the city's Nayapalton and Kakrail areas following news that ruling party men foiled an opposition rally in Netrakona. They torched three vehicles and vanda-



lised 20 others. The agitators pelted brickbats and homemade crackers at police while the law enforcers retaliated with truncheons. They also fired shotgun shells in the air and about 50 teargas canisters to disperse the agitators. Police picked up at least 10 people from

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