

## Buddhists

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generations irrespective of religious belief. But now, mistrust and suspicion will reign in their neighbourhoods, locals apprehend.

The way the government bodies are conducting probes, it will not be a secret who is testifying against whom. This places the witnesses in a dilemma, they added.

An investigator from the police told The Daily Star that most of the Buddhists are scared to disclose the names of the locals whom they saw among the miscreants on the night of September 29.

A sense of insecurity is increasing among the Buddhists as some of them have already been warned by Muslim neighbours not to disclose the names.

Santosh Barua, a former member of Fateharkul union, gave a statement to the investigators Thursday morning.

He mentioned some names of Muslim neighbours who incited and helped others to carry out arson and vandalism.

After giving the statement, while talking to this correspondent, he received a phone call.

After the conversation, Santosh told this correspondent, "He [the Caller] was threatening me that the consequences would not be good if I do not withdraw his brother's name from my statement."

"I will never withdraw the names as I saw them how they instigated people," he added. "That night I saw who came forward to help us and who provoked the attackers."

He said many local participants of anti-Buddhist processions are now claiming they were not there or they were there to prevent the demonstrators from destroying Buddhist establishments.

All are not as bold as Santosh. Many Buddhists of Ramu told The Daily Star that they were in fear of further attacks and losses.

"Some of us have been receiving messages from our well-wishers to take care as we are helping the investigation to the displeasure of neighbours," said a Buddhist teacher preferring anonymity.

Yesterday afternoon, a former minister went to visit the ruins of century-old Sima Bihar. He talked to Buddhist victims in the open and wanted to know about the rioters.

A local leader told him that nobody would speak the truth in front of others.

## 800 shanties

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that they had been recovering the 6.12 acre land from grabbers.

The Bhandari slum had been home to low-income people like rickshaw pullers and day labourers for about two decades.

Of the evicted, 80 persons have claimed to be freedom fighters and members of "Grihaheen Muktijoddha Samabay Samity", a cooperative society of homeless freedom fighters.

They also claimed that some ministers of the then Awami League government in 1999 had assured them of allotting the land and that later they had applied to the NHA for the allotment in response to which the NHA said it could be possible.

They, however, could not immediately show any documents in support of the claim.

The evicted people, including women and children, are now looking for shelter.

Many said they had to pass the rainy night on Thursday under the open sky, as they were not given sufficient time to move, except for an announcement on loudspeaker on Wednesday.

An NHA official, preferring anonymity, said the housing authority had served eviction notice on the slum dwellers three months ago.

Joint Secretary Ibrahim Dewan of the Grihaheen Muktijoddha Samabay Samity, however, said they had received no such notice.

## Tk 74 lakh

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generations irrespective of religious belief. But now, mistrust and suspicion will reign in their neighbourhoods, locals apprehend.

Azam, driver of Suranjit's ex-assistant personal secretary Omar Faruq Talukder, had been missing since the railwaygate scandal.

Around 11:30pm on April 9, Azam drove Faruq's microbus into Pilkhana, and blew the whistle that there was illegal money in the vehicle.

Apart from Faruq, railway's suspended general manager (east) Yusuf Ali Mridha and suspended Dhaka division security commandant Enamul Huq were on the microbus.

Initial reports said there was Tk 70 lakh in the car, which was part of the "bribe money" collected from jobseekers in the railway.

After the vehicle entered Pilkhana, the Border Guard Bangladesh detained the four for that night but freed them around 1:00pm the next day.

"No, no, I had no link with anyone. I didn't take money from anybody promising jobs. Though later rumours were spread about me," he said in the exclusive interview with Rtv's Bayezid Ahmed.

The interview was also aired throughout yesterday.

As he was driving into the BGB headquarters through gate No 4, Faruq asked him where he was going. "I said this is bribe money collected from jobseekers in the railway. I will have you arrested with this money," Azam told Rtv.

"Then Faruq said this is not right. You drove the car inside [Pilkhana]. Then they offered me Tk 5 lakh and asked me to come out. Later, they offered me half the amount.... But I said, 'no, sir.' Finally, they offered me the whole amount."

Upon counting in the morning, it turned out that there was Tk 74 lakh in the car, he said, adding: "Then along with the money, they went away in the car driven by another person."

In the 4-minute interview given at an unspecified location, Azam said Major Mashirul Rahman was also involved in the recruitment business. "As far as I know he was involved in a Tk 3 crore recruitment deal. He wanted to have several hundred people appointed in the railway through Omar Faruq."

According to him, Faruq, a political appointee of the former rail minister, headed the syndicate of the recruitment business.

"I heard them talk in the car that they would give Tk 10 crore to the minister from recruitment business. And 600 'personal' people of Suranjit Sengupta would be recruited."

However, it was not clear from the interview if that discussion took place on the night of April 9 or on other occasions.

"They want to put the blame on the government. The minister was involved in the scam. There was a syndicate. They threatened me, saying that the government was involved in this."

"But I know the honourable prime minister is against corruption. Let no corrupt go unpunished. I appeal to the prime minister for my safety."

The railwaygate scandal led to the resignation of Suranjit Sengupta as minister.

**France to propose Mali resolution at UN**

AFP, United Nations

France will soon propose a resolution to the Security Council paving the way for United Nations approval of military intervention in Mali, the French ambassador said Thursday.

The text will combine "a military and political response" to the crisis in the west African country and appeal for dialogue between Bamako and Islamists controlling the north of the country, said French envoy Gerard Araud.

"It will also authorize people to send trainers to Bamako because we have to rebuild the Malian army," he added.

The 14-member delegation of civil society would visit the scenes of violence at Ramu and Ukhia upazilas in Cox's Bazar and Hindu temples in Chittagong's Patiya upazila.

During the visit, the delegation was expected to mount pressure on local administration to start immediate investigation into the incidents, said columnist Syed Abdul Maksud, who would lead the delegation.

Joint Secretary Ibrahim Dewan of the Grihaheen Muktijoddha Samabay Samity, however, said they had received no such notice.

## Move fast

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Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, Mukherjee called for expediting implementation of the projects already agreed on between the two countries, said a Rashtrapati Bhavan spokesperson in a release.

He also favoured a greater sub-regional cooperation between Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India, especially on improving connectivity and issue of transit.

Mukherjee, who became President in July, said India had the privilege of extending some assistance in the historical struggle of Bangladesh for freedom and would like to see Bangladesh developed and prosperous.

"There is broad consensus amongst various political parties in India that the two countries must develop and progress together," he was quoted in the release as saying.

Noting that the dialogue process between scholars of the two countries was extremely important, he said, such an exercise should identify critical areas where intervention by senior policymakers was required and bring those to the attention of the respective governments.

Mukherjee has received an invitation from Bangladesh government and expressed the hope to visit the country at a mutually convenient date.

The delegation praised Mukherjee and said the people of Bangladesh see him as a "sincere friend" and hope that bilateral relations under his guidance would reach new heights, the release said.

They also appreciated India's decision to grant zero duty access for Bangladeshi goods to Indian market.

The intellectuals who were in Delhi to attend the second Track-II Dialogue between the Asian Institute of Transport Development of India and the Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka included Prof Rehman Sobhan, chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue and former member of Planning Commission; Gowher Rizvi, foreign affairs advisor to the Bangladesh prime minister; Reza Ali, MP and member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Planning; Anisul Islam Mahmud, MP, vice president of Jatiya Party and Former foreign minister of Bangladesh; Nazrul Islam Khan, member of BNP National Standing Committee; Ambassador Farooq Sobhan, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute and former foreign secretary of Bangladesh; AK Azad, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry and managing director of Ha-Meeem Group.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Matiur Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo; Prof Ainun Nishat, vice chancellor of Brac University and eminent writer expert; M Rahmatullah, Visiting Fellow, CPD and former director of UNESCAP and eminent transport expert; Debapriya Bhattacharya, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and former Bangladesh ambassador to WTO and UN Office in Geneva and Vienna; Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of CPD; Tariq Karim, high commissioner of Bangladesh to India; and KL Thapar, chairman of Asian Institute of Transport Development also attended the meeting, among others.

Holding placards saying "The earth is for everyone, not only for Muslims" and "Stop insulting Buddhism", the monks staged a short protest outside the Bangladeshi Embassy of the former Myanmar capital, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman apologised to the Buddhist community yesterday during his visit Shima Bihar at Ramu.

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The wreckage of the microbus and the bus at Tetli of Sylhet on Dhaka-Sylhet highway. The head-on collision early yesterday claimed 13 lives including 12 of a family.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

## Fatal crash takes 13 lives

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Abdul Karim, 32.

Waris' grandsons Salman, 5, and Al-Amin, 2, granddaughter Fatema, 6, younger brother's wife Razia Begum, 50, Piar's brother Rafique Miah, 50, one of their relatives Jamal Ahmed 35, and the microbus driver Hiron Mia, 27, were among the dead.

The injured bus passengers took treatment at Osmani Medical College Hospital and other local clinics, he added.

Twelve of the victims died on the spot while a female passenger succumbed to her injuries after being admitted to Osmani Medical College Hospital, police said.

All the bodies were taken to the South Surma Police Station.

Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) shrine.

Soon after the accident, locals put up barricades on the highway for around four hours and vandalised a number of buses.

A long queue of around 400 vehicles clogged the highway on both directions.

Vehicular movement resumed on the highway around 10:45 am after police and local administration intervened.

Khan Mohammad Bilal, deputy commissioner of Sylhet police, said Tk 10,000 would be distributed to each of the victims' family members.

to the DC office records; BDDL Natundhara owns 173 acres of its 360-acre proposed area. The area includes six acres of government land and two acres vested property.

United City owns 122 acres of its proposed 137-acre project area that includes nearly 10 acres vested property and 30 decimals government land.

Green Model Town submitted a 149-acre layout for approval. Of the total area, it owns 130 acres.

Doherty was the most expensive Australian bowler with 1-48 from three overs, while Watson went for 35 runs in four unsuccessful overs.

Another new provision of "development contract" with private individuals for 30 percent land ownership would help grabbing individual's land forcibly by the real estate developers and dictate the deal as per its desire and convenience, said official sources.

It would also deprive the government of registration fees required in the case of ownership transfer through registrar's office.

Another new provision implies that a housing scheme approved earlier would remain valid even if the developer resorts to anomalies. Only the developer's registration would be cancelled as a punishment for the offence.

Mannan Khan claimed that the amendments had been made in consultation with all concerned.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda said he was unaware of the amendment.

Abdul Mannan Khan, the state minister, said the environment department and utility agencies had already issued clearance in their favour. "The developers would have sued us had we not approved the schemes," he mentioned.

According to Dhaka district administration records, Bashundhara submitted a 1,435-acre layout (A-L blocks), of which it owns 1,213 acres. The proposed area includes 216 acres of Court of Wards land and 18 acres of Khas or government land, including river and canal.

The Court of Wards under the land ministry is the management body to oversee the government lands under Bhawal estate.

While Ashiyana City has got approval of a 43-acre area layout, its proposed site is many times larger, according to official findings. The proposed site includes some amount of Court of Wards and local Union Parishad lands.

Later, Moudud told reporters that they did not go there as a political team. As it was a sensitive issue, they were trying to make an impartial assessment.

In reply to a question regarding the allegation of the home minister on the role of local BNP lawmaker, Moudud said he would not make any comment on the issue now.

## Aussies caught

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unsighted to aggressive bat-

The Australians found the huge target too hot to handle and folded up for 131 in 16.4 overs at the Premadasa stadium in front of 28,000 awe-struck spectators still reeling from the West Indies' win.

Skipper George Bailey played a lone hand for the Aussies, making 63 off 29 balls with four sixes and six boundaries after adding 68 for the seventh wicket with Pat Cummins.

Darren Sammy's men take on hosts Sri Lanka in Sunday's final with both sides looking for their first World Twenty20 title.

The biggest Twenty20 win for the West Indies, surpassing their 70-run victory over Ireland in 2010, was celebrated by the entire team performing an energetic version of global hit "Gangnam Style" in the middle.