

# ATTACK ON BUDDHISTS Judicial probe demanded by rights bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three human rights organisations yesterday demanded a judicial probe into the recent attacks on Buddhist temples and houses in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong, and measures to protect the religious minorities.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and Manusher Jonno Foundation made the demand at a press briefing in Cox's Bazar municipality office, a day after the rights activists visited the affected areas.

On September 29 night, a mob of religious zealots destroyed 12 temples and more than 50 houses in Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar. The following day, two monasteries and a Hindu

temple were vandalised in Chittagong's Patiya upazila and two monasteries set ablaze in Ukha of Cox's Bazar. The violence was apparently triggered by a Facebook posting of a photo defaming the holy Quran.

The rights organisations also demanded immediate identification and trial of the culprits; punitive actions against the law enforcers who neglected their duties during the mayhem; and measures to ensure peaceful coexistence of all the communities.

They also asked for recovery of the artefacts that have been looted during the rampage and reconstruction of the damaged Buddhist establishments.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekaruzzaman said the role of the administration and law enforcers dur-

ing the attacks remained questionable.

"Several incidents of arson and vandalism took place in more than one area of Ukha just after the home minister had visited Cox's Bazar," he added.

ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal said the attack on the Buddhist community was premeditated. In Ukha, it was made in guerrilla style, she added.

ASK Chairperson Dr Hameeda Hossain and Manusher Jonno Foundation Director Rina Roy spoke at the press briefing.

The rights leaders appreciated the government initiative to distribute cash among the affected Buddhists immediately after the incident. They, however, urged the politicians to avoid blame game.

## Floating body of young man recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of an unidentified young man was found floating in a pond in the capital's Sabujbagh area yesterday.

Subajbagh Police Station Sub-Inspector Abdul Kadir said they recovered the body from the pond around 2:00pm.

The body was clad in three-quarter pants, and a sleeveless shirt. But it was decayed, he said.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Police suspect that the body was dumped into the pond around five to seven days ago.

# Renewable energy promoter lacks power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament has drafted a new law to set up a "sustainable and renewable energy development authority" but has not given the proposed body enough power to gradually increase the use of renewable energy, experts said yesterday.

The role of the authority has been largely confined to only encouraging the use of renewable energy and assisting the government in this regard, they said. The real power lies in the hands of the government, they added.

Such an authority should be independent if the government really wants to increase the share of renewable energy up to 10 per cent in the country's total energy consumption by 2020, they told a views exchange meeting with the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Scientists, educationists, researchers,

businesspersons and journalists spoke on the occasion.

Renewable energy represents 1.5 per cent of the country's total power consumption at present with 13 lakh solar home systems and 45,000 bio-gas plants. Considering global warming and excessive dependence on non-renewable energy resources, the government wants to increase the use of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.

The experts termed the effort to create the body a major step but said the proposed law needed revision. Since the law talks about a chairman and a 16-member board of directors but does not specify the qualifications of the chairman, the experts feared that the new authority would become another dumping place for retired bureaucrats.

State Minister for Power and Energy M Enamul Huq placed the bill in parliament in mid-September to set up the new agency.

## Young journos urged to follow Ataus Samad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young journalists should study and follow the ideology of eminent journalist Ataus Samad and provide the nation with fair and objective news, speakers said at a commemorative programme yesterday.

Commemorating the media personality, Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University organised the programme at the university's senate building.

Addressing the programme, noted media personality ABM Musa, who inspired Ataus Samad to build his career as a journalist in his early age, said Samad's dedication and commitment for the people was praiseworthy.

Supernumerary Professor Shakhawat Ali Khan said Ataus Samad, who was also a teacher at DU, was successful in teaching and journalism simultaneously but he was widely known as a media personality.

Ataus Samad was very curious about all incidents that took place in his time, which is a prerequisite for a good journalist, he added.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said young journalists should learn the ideology of the noted journalist to maintain objectivity and impartiality in the field of journalism.

Prof Akhtar Sultana, chairperson of mass communication and journalism department at DU, among others, addressed the programme.

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## ATN Bangla chairman withdraws case against 10 journalist leaders

COURT CORRESPONDENT

ATN Bangla Chairman Mahfuzur Rahman yesterday withdrew the case he had filed against 10 journalist leaders for making and publishing derogatory statements involving him in the murder of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

In his petition seeking permission for the case's withdrawal, Mahfuzur Rahman said he no longer had allegations against whom he had earlier sued, and he was not willing to proceed with the case.

Judge Fazle Elahi Bhuiyan of the First Joint District Judge's Court of Dhaka accepted the petition.

On September 10, Mahfuzur Rahman sued 59 journalist leaders who planned demonstrations to protest against his alleged involvement in the journalist couple murder. He however had dropped names of 49 leaders the next day.

Accused in the case included Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ); Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, secretary general of the BFUJ; Ruhul Amin Gazi, president of a faction of the BFUJ, and Shakhawat Hossain Badsha, president of Dhaka Reporters Unity.

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