

ATTACK IN KHAGRACHHARI

# Victims demand rehabilitation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The ethnic people, who lost everything in arson attacks at Taindong under Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari on Saturday, demanded rehabilitation to get back to normal life.

"After returning to the site of my home, I have found nothing but ashes as everything is burnt down. We need rehabilitation to start our life again," said Kripa Mohon Chakma, an arson victim from Sarbeswar village.

Hemantabala Chakma, another arson victim from Bagapara village, said they had been passing their days like nomads, urging the authorities concerned to come up with immediate measures to rehabilitate them.

District administration in coordination with the members of the Border Guard Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Army completed setting up around 30 tents at the arson-affected Bagapara and Sarbeswar Para in the area yesterday, four days after the attacks.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Masud Karim of Khagrachhari said, "The

rehabilitation process is underway. At the initial stage, each arson-affected family will get Tk 7,500, and the families that escaped to the neighbouring Indian border out of fear will get Tk 1,000 each."

The remoteness of the areas affected had contributed to the delay in giving compensation, he said.

On Saturday, triggered by the rumour of abduction, Bengali settlers set fire to Bagapara, Sarbeswar Para, Monudas Para, Bandarshing Para, and Talukdar Para in the upazila.

At least 33 houses were burnt, 20 more looted.

Two Buddhist monasteries were also vandalised in the attacks.

Around 450 families of those villages fled to the neighbouring Indian border.

About 160 families from Purabari, Headman Para, Laifu Kumar Karbari Para and Marma Para also fled to the neighbouring villages under Panchhari upazila in the district.

They, however, returned to their ancestral home after assurances from the CHT affairs minister and the local administration.



Indigenous people of Bagapara in Matiranga of Khagrachhari wait for relief yesterday. Their homes were burnt to the ground when Bangalee settlers attacked them earlier this week.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mob beats

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Locals, however, managed to catch a member of the gang named Ramjan. They beat and stabbed him, leaving him dead on the spot.

Later, in the morning, the locals found another two dacoits named Babul and Masum on the rooftop of a house in the village, and gave them a sound beating before informing the police.

On information, police rushed to the spot around 10:30am, recovered the dead, and rescued the injured.

The rescued were taken to Kapsasia Upazila Health Complex. But the on-duty doctors declared them dead.

Police also seized choppers, knives, and sticks from the spot that were used by the robbers.

The bodies were sent to Gazipur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies.

Murder cases accusing unnamed villagers will be filed, OC Delowar said at 5:45pm.

## Eid likely tomorrow

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in the country's sky. People, who want to share information on moon sighting, have been requested to contact at the following numbers: 9559493, 9559643, 9555947, 9556407 and 9558337 or fax: 9563397, said a release of the foundation.

The largest Eid congregation in the country will be held at Sholakia Eidgah in Kishoreganj.

In the capital, the main congregation will be held at the National Eidgah near the High Court building at 8:30am.

In the case of inclement weather, the main congregation will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 9:00am, according to an official announcement.

Five congregations will be held at the National Mosque at 7:00am, 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am and 11:00am.

Devotees have been requested not to carry camera and mobile phone while taking part in Eid prayers at the National Eidgah, reports BSS.

Eid congregations will also be held in Armanitola and Dhophkola Maidans. An Eid jamaat (congregation) will be held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad at 8:00am.

Two Eid jamaats will be held at Dhaka University Central Mosque at 8:00am and 9:00am.

The Eid congregation at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) ground will be held at 7:45 am.

In case of inclement weather, the jamaat will be held at the Buet central mosque at 8:00am.

The Eid congregation at Bashiruddin Road Jame Mosque in Kolabagan will be held at 8:30am.

Law enforcers have taken stringent security measures

at different Eid congregation venues across the country.

President Abul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia issued separate messages greeting the people on the occasion.

The national flag will be hoisted atop government and non-government office buildings on Eid day.

Marking the festival, the city thoroughfares and road islands will be decorated with national flags and banners inscribed with Eid Mubarak.

National dailies will bring out supplements while BTB and private TV channels and radio stations will telecast special programmes on the occasion.

Special diet will be served to children staying at orphanages and people at hospitals, jails and old homes on Eid day.

## The propaganda and the mindset

FROM PAGE 1

It is quite natural that prior to elections political parties will go on a public relations offensive, and to achieve it they will launch all sorts of propaganda to put forward their best achievements.

This is more true of a party that came to power with a massive landslide but has suffered terrible defeats in recent polls. So for Awami League to go for a propaganda offensive is not only not surprising but in fact critically necessary.

Thus AL propaganda per se did not surprise us. But the banal, unethical and illegal manner in which it was done has shocked us.

Billboards are a private business. There are 1,200 legal ones owned by the municipality, which they lease/rent out to advertising agencies, who in turn rent them to clients. Over the years billboards have

become a big business (greatly damaging the city's beauty, which is a separate issue against which we have written hundreds of times without much success), with thousands of them springing up in every conceivable space, and in some inconceivable ones as well, many of them unauthorised but operated with the connivance of the higherups.

With the growth of the city's population and economic strength these billboards became more and more expensive, with many of them costing as high as Tk 50 lakh a year in some strategic places. The average cost will be around Tk 12 lakh in the main thoroughfares. Collectively it is several hundred crore taka annual business.

As a political party AL can definitely launch a propaganda for itself. For that purpose they can of

course hire billboards. And AL has all the money for this purpose and even bundles more. But that is not how they chose to go about it.

The ruling party opted to "hijack" billboards instead.

The advertising agencies that had leased them and the business houses that hired them found their properties taken over by the ruling party. Why? Because the Awami League felt like telling the people how successful they have been. Was any permission sought from the paid users of the billboards? No. Who will compensate for the lost business? Nobody knows. For how many days will the 'takeover' continue? Nobody knows. By whose order were these billboards occupied? Nobody knows. However, given the fact that AL leaders have publicly endorsed the action, we can surmise that it was a party

decision.

So the question is what sort of "mindset" prompted Awami League to indulge in a criminal act of 'hijacking' city billboards, which are private property? Did it not occur to them that taking over these billboards is an unlawful act, similar to occupying someone's house or office or factory or land and telling the owners that we are going to use it for a certain time? It is like going to the owner of a car, bus or steamer and taking it over just because we need them.

When the distinction between proper and improper, decent and indecent, right and wrong, ethical and unethical and, most importantly, legal and illegal, becomes either blurred or inconsequential in the thought process of any citizen, especially those belonging to the ruling party members,

then we have the makings of a severe law and order problem.

Imagine anybody else doing the same thing. God forbid, if the opposition BNP did it? There would have been several police cases by now with, maybe, some arrests also. But that would have been the most correct action. So, why not in this case? Just think of the precedent it sets and the terrible consequences that might follow unless it is "nipped in the bud".

The Prime Minister never tires of claiming that nobody is above the law. If so, then the ruling party, in illegally occupying the billboards, has broken the law. We wait to see what action she takes, for what has happened is both immoral and illegal, and as the highest elected leader and law enforcer of the country she cannot ignore it.

## Govt to amend election rules

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At present, the government appoints three of the directors, including the chairman, of the microcredit organisation's board, while the remaining nine members, all of whom are women borrowers, are elected from grass-roots level through a three-tier election system.

The centre heads of a branch nominate the most qualified borrower and send her to compete at the 'area' level. The areas then forward a candidate to the 'zone' level. Nine borrowers are chosen as directors from the nine zones or constituencies.

But the two-member committee, formed in April by the finance ministry, suggested a two-tier system. In the first tier, the borrower-shareholders of each of the nine constituencies would elect a 15-member electoral body. The members of the nine electoral bodies would then decide among themselves who would be serving as directors.

Under the current system, the Grameen Bank board appoints the election commissioner from its officials, and the zonal officers act as returning officers. The two-tier system calls for deputy commissioners of each of the nine constituencies to administer the elections.

"The application of the proposed rules will eventually bring about a wider representation and sustainability of the board by reducing the influence of any particular group or vested quarter," the committee said in its recent letter to the banking division of the finance ministry.

CURRENT RULES	PROPOSED RULES
Three-tier election: Centre heads of a branch nominate the most qualified borrower and send her to compete at 'area' level. The areas pick a candidate and send her to zone. Nine borrowers are chosen as directors from nine zones/constituencies.	Two-tier election: Borrowers will elect 15 representatives from each of nine constituencies. Representatives will elect one director among themselves from each constituency
GB board appoints election commission	Govt-appointed election commission to conduct polls
GB officials act as election commissioner and returning officers	Independent individuals will act as election commissioners; and deputy commissioners as returning officers
All nine borrower-directors retire after three-year tenure	One-third of the borrower-directors to retire every year

At present, the election for the nine borrower-directors is held every three years, but as per the recommendations of the committee, the election would have to take place every year.

The elected directors would still hold office for three years, but one-third of them would retire from the board each year to make way for new directors. The rotation of elected directors for the first two years shall be decided by mutual understanding or lottery, said the committee. The retiring directors cannot be elected for consecutive terms.

The proposals came after the Grameen Bank Commission, in its interim report, said the existing electoral process goes against the most fundamental and explicit directive of the Grameen Bank Ordinance.

But the current nine elected directors as well as Prof Muhammad Yunus, the organisation's founder, rebuffed the move, saying the changes go against the interests of the bank and are an attempt to take control of the bank.

"We will never accept the proposals—it is part of the government's scheme to take over the bank," Tahsina Khatun, a member of Grameen Bank board, told TheDailyStar yesterday.

She said every item in the draft election rule is against the interests of the bank—and are, therefore, unnecessary.

"The existing rules have served us well over the years, and we will persist with them," she said, adding that if outsiders are brought in to conduct elections it would only create chaos.

Khatun said the govern-

ment has targeted the elected directors as the current nine members have been very vocal against any state intervention since Prof Yunus stepped down as managing director in 2011 and have managed to block all the authorities' plans.

She was backed by Prof Yunus, who also criticised the suggestions to amend the rules.

"Elections to the borrower-director posts are being held without any problems. Nobody has raised questions about it so far and said injustice has been done," he said while speaking at a public reception accorded to him in Dhaka on Friday.

Were the elections to be held every year, as per the suggestions of the committee to fill in the three directorial posts, it would take up all of Grameen Bank's time. "We would have to leave our usual activities aside," Khatun said.

"These are all unrealistic ideas," added Prof Yunus.

If approved, the Grameen Bank (Election of Directors) Rules, 2013 will replace the Grameen Bank (Election of Directors) Rules 1987.

A finance ministry official said an inter-ministerial meeting would discuss the draft and opinions from the law ministry would be taken before the new rules take effect.

Shah Alam Sarwar, managing director of IFIC Bank, was appointed as convener of the committee and Murad Reza, additional attorney general of Supreme Court, the member secretary.

## No change in GB structure

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government share in the bank is utterly nonsense. It came from his head."

Muhith said he has not yet received the final report of the Grameen Bank Commission that the government set up in May last year to review the operations of the bank and the associated organisations founded by Prof Yunus, and to make recommendations about their future structure.

The committee was asked to submit a report in three months of its formation. But it is yet to turn in the report.

"The report may suggest increasing the government share in the bank. But the government has no such plan," said Muhith.

The commission drew widespread criticism at home and abroad after it made suggestions in its interim report and also in letters to the participants of a proposed workshop. It planned to recommend that the bank be restructured in a way that would give the government a controlling stake in it.

The government's share in Grameen Bank remained at 3.29 percent until June, as the government didn't make payments against its share in the paid-up capital. As a result, the share of borrower-shareholders had increased to 96.71 percent.

The government made payments in June to win back one-fourth share in the microcredit organisation.

Muhith said the government has already increased its share in the bank to the desired level.

Criticising Prof Yunus, the minister said from the day he left Grameen Bank, he had been saying that the government wants to take control of the bank.

"He [Prof Yunus] also said many other things. All these are lies."

Finance ministry officials said an inter-ministerial meeting will be held on August 14 to get the opinions of representatives of Bangladesh Bank, Grameen Bank and nine ministries

about turning the Grameen Bank Ordinance 1983 into an act.

Asking not to be named, a finance ministry official said no new provision has been included in the proposed law.

It has suggested that the approved capital of Grameen Bank should be Tk 350 crore and it should be turned into 3.50 crore shares of Tk 100 each.

And the bank's paid-up capital will be Tk 300 crore, which now stands around Tk 74 crore. The government will have 25 percent share in it, while the rest will be in the hands of bank borrowers.

Ministry officials said the managing director of Grameen Bank, the director general of the NGO Affairs Bureau, vice chairman of Micro-credit Regulatory Authority, the registrar of the Directorate of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, and representatives of the National Board of Revenue have been asked to attend the August 14 meeting.

## Travelling

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being used to transport tourists to and from a nature and camping facility in Girona, Spain.

Granan said: "Urban green areas are crucial for photosynthesis, a process in which plants absorb CO2 and release O2 - vital for purifying the air we breathe.

"The lungs of a city must grow at the same rate as its population, but much-needed green areas are not always available.

"Our mission is to expand the garden area in urban areas, increase the absorption of CO2 and give public transport a new ecological and tourist attraction."

The system uses lightweight 7cm-thick hydroponic foam, which retains humidity but not water, and helps to reduce the weight in periods of continuous rain.

Small shrubs can then be planted to suit the climate of the host city or to match a particular bus lines own identifying garden.

To water the roof, it is only necessary to make use of the condensation of the air-conditioning units installed on the roof of the vehicle.

The hotter it gets, and the more water the plants need, the more they are watered, by the simple act of using the air-conditioning.

The bus's innovator added: "It really started last summer, when I made the first prototype on a bus in a small town near Barcelona.

"It stills working now and, thanks to its PhytoKinetic vegetable roof, temperature inside have decreased 3.5C."

Granan is now in discussion with an auto company interested in sponsoring a fleet in Barcelona.

## Nuke plant work starts in October

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told The Daily Star. The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Office, also discussed the progress made so far in setting up the country's first nuclear plant, he

deals with Russia to build the 1000-megawatt plant to meet the energy crisis.

Russia has agreed to provide Bangladesh with 90 percent cost for constructing the plant.

Ministers and secretaries of the finance, agriculture, environment, water resources, foreign, planning and science and technology ministries are the members of the national committee.

The phase of diplomatic efforts has ended today," the presidency said, referring to mediation by Burns and EU envoy Bernardino Leon, who were among other diplomats who had travelled to Cairo.

"These efforts have not achieved the hoped for results."

The presidency said it "holds the Muslim Brotherhood completely responsible for the failure of these efforts, and for consequent events and developments relating to violations of the law and endangering public safety."

More than 250 people have been killed in clashes since Morsi's ouster by the military on July 3, following days of mass rallies demanding the president's resignation.

The government had already ordered police to end the sit-ins and protests, which it described as a "national security threat," but held off

amid intense diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful resolution.

An airport official said Burns, in Cairo since Friday, left on Tuesday night after days of talks with the interim rulers, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Adding his weight to the drive for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon urged the release of Morsi, who has been formally remanded in custody in an undisclosed location.