



A recent photo of Sima Bihar, top, in Ramu of Cox's Bazar, rebuilt after it was torched, inset, last year. The rebuilt Lal Singh Moitree Bihar complex, bottom, after it was vandalised and a temple in it was burnt to the ground, inset.

RAMU ATTACKS CASES 7 charge sheets finalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police finalised seven charge sheets out of the 19 cases filed in connection with the attacks and looting of Buddhist temples and villages in Ramu and Ukhia of Cox's Bazar in September last year.

Cox's Bazar Superintendent of Police Md Azad Miah said that the charge sheets were finalised after scrutiny of facts and extensive investigations of the incidents of attack, arson and looting. "The charge sheets will be submitted in court within a few days. Of the remaining 12 cases, investigations into eight are in the final stages. They will be submitted in court within the next month."

Cox's Bazar Additional Superintendent of Police Babul Akter said that 193 of the 364 accused and suspected in the seven cases were arrested.

A group of culprits on the night of September 29, 2012 ransacked and looted five temples and burnt down 12 more. The criminals also attacked Buddhist villages in the area, ransacking and looting 50 dwellings and burning down 15 houses.

Four out of the five attacked Buddhist temples in Ukhia upazila were set on fire the next day.

Police later filed 13 cases in connection with the incidents of violence, while the affected locals lodged six more cases with four police stations.

A total of 375 people were accused and 14,807 shown as suspects in the 19 cases. Police, till yesterday, have arrested 187 accused and 339 suspects in connection with the cases. Of the arrested, 23 have already confessed to their involvement in the incidents last year at a court.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Ramu and Ukhia on September 3 to inaugurate 19 Buddhist temples and Bihars in the two upazilas.

Ready again

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The reconstruction work of the temples alone cost the government Tk 20 crore, said AS Anwar Hossain, deputy commanding officer of the battalion.

Under the project, seven temples were reconstructed and five repaired in Ramu while five reconstructed and two repaired in Ukhia, added Anwar, who supervised the work.

Renowned architect Bishwajit Barua designed the temples and gave other technical support. The deputy commissioner

said Hasina would inaugurate the Bimukti Bidarshan Bhabna Kendra, a temple at Uttar Mithachhari village in Ramu, at 11:00am.

She will then inaugurate Ramu Kendriyo Seema Bihar in Ramu Sadar upazila, Lal Ching in Shreekul, Moitri Ching Bihar, Arpona Ching and Sada Ching.

In the afternoon, the PM will inaugurate several establishments in Ukhia, including a number of temples, the Sea Research Institute, Teknaf Fire Service Station, Service Delivery Centre, Teknaf Police Station Bhaban and

Cox's Bazar Muktijoddha Complex.

Hasina is also expected to address a public meeting on the Ukhia High School premises, added the DC.

Lt Col Zulfikar Rahman, commanding officer of the 17 ECB Battalion of Bangladesh Army, said the beauty and exceptional designs of the reconstructed temples would boost tourism.

Pandit Satyapriyo Mahathero, former president of Sangharaj Mahasabha, said Sheikh Hasina's sincerity in completing the work was praiseworthy.

Mozena visits

FROM PAGE 16

at the human rights body's office around 12:30pm.

They later held an hour-long meeting with Odhikar president Dr CR Abrar, its founding member Saira Rahman Khan, director ASM Nasiruddin Elan, and senior researcher Taskin Fahmina.

The issue of Adilur's arrest had created concern around the world including this country, Mozena told journalists after coming out of the meeting.

"Any charges against him, I hope, would be pursued through judicial process," he added.

Odhikar's president Abrar said the US delegation had asked whether Adilur, a former deputy attorney general, had been given any

division in jail. They also wanted to know about his present condition, and hoped that the matter would be resolved soon, Abrar added.

In reply to a question whether the US ambassador had asked for the list of victims mentioned in the Odhikar report, Abrar said the issue was not discussed in the meeting.

Adilur was arrested on August 10, and later sent to jail following the publication of a controversial report published by Odhikar, which claimed 61 people were killed in a crackdown by law enforcers on Hefajate Islam's programme in the capital's Shapla Chattar on May 5.

Odhikar's claim, how-

ever, contradicts the government's version that says 13 people died on that day.

The findings of mainstream electronic and print media also disagreed with the Odhikar report.

Promising to hold a non-violent rally to press home their demands, thousands of Hefajat activists occupied the capital's commercial hub on May 5, and destroyed public property.

Their demands included the arrest of "atheist bloggers" and realisation of the 13-point demand including the introduction of blasphemy law.

Members of police, Rapid Action Battalion, and Border Guard Bangladesh flushed them out in the early hours of May 6.

Correction

In our story headlined 'Classy clay house' published on Page-2 on August 25, the name of the architect was mistakenly written as Anna Heninger. It should actually be Anna Heringer, who was born in Rosenheim in Germany and is currently living in Salzburg in Austria. We apologise for the inadvertent error.

KL plans

FROM PAGE 16 but subsequently failed to come forward to be legalised or deported.

"It is now time for full enforcement," Alias told The Star.

The amnesty scheme was aimed at registering illegals, and 1.3 million came forward.

Talks? Huh!

FROM PAGE 1

for dialogue. That effort too went in vain. Their dislikes for each other seem to grow, giving rise to the fear of confrontational politics in the country.

Finally, the judiciary stepped in and issued a ruling to make them sit together. But they are yet to respond.

They are none other than the nation's two top leaders - ruling Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and her arch rival BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

None of the two leaders has responded to the High Court ruling that was issued five months back over the holding of a dialogue between them to resolve the ongoing political crisis, according to court sources.

Following a writ petition, the HC on March 27 issued the ruling on both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to sit for a dialogue.

People think a new dawn could break on the country's political landscape if the two leaders talk to each other, which still seems to be a distant dream.

However, both the leaders never forget to do one thing. They greet each other during Eid festivals, but not in person. They exchange greeting cards through their messengers.

Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond filed the writ petition with the HC seeking its directive on the two leaders to initiate discussions at the earliest to shun the path of confrontation and formulate guidelines to hold the next parliamentary election in a free, fair and acceptable manner.

He stated that the life and properties of people as well as the country's economic development are at stake due to the ongoing political crisis that must end for the sake of the nation and the people. Lawyers for both Hasina

and Khaleda told The Daily Star that they had not replied to the ruling since the court had issued the order beyond its jurisdiction.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman, who represents the prime minister in this case, said the HC cannot issue any directive on political parties for holding discussions.

"The political crisis cannot be resolved through the court of law," he said.

Rahman, however, said they might reply to the ruling at the hearing of the case.

Khandker Mahbub Hossain, a lawyer and adviser to Khaleda, said the HC had no legal mandate to issue such ruling.

"We will not give any reply to the ruling," he said.

Petitioner Akond told The Daily Star that he would pray to the HC soon for holding the hearing and giving a directive in the case, as the people as well as the UN and the USA are calling for talks between the two leaders.

No info

FROM PAGE 1 but their number might be less than a dozen," said Shameem Ahsan, director general of (External Publicity) the foreign ministry.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said Bangladesh has no mission in Syria but the one in Amman, Jordan, looks after Syria. The Amman mission has not yet received any information about any Bangladeshi living in Syria.

"We are unable to take any step as none from Syria contacted us until today [Wednesday]. Even we are unable to issue any security alert there as we have no institutional contact there," Shameem Ahsan said, adding that the government would certainly take steps to evacuate any Bangladeshi from Syria, if found.

Director General of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) Begum Shamsun Nahar said they had no record of any Bangladeshi in Syria.

Clouds over Asia

FROM PAGE 1 significantly against the dollar.

The Indian rupee has dropped by nearly 4 percent to a new low of 68.85 to the dollar yesterday -- the lowest in 20 years -- amid growing concerns over the health of its economy, as a surge in oil prices threatened to worsen the current account and push the economy toward its biggest crisis since 1991.

The slide of the Indian currency is poised to cause some major dent to Bangladesh's garment business abroad, as the two neighbouring countries compete in the same segment globally.

"Even the confirmed orders will go to India if the rupee continues to decline this way," said Abudus Salam Murshedy, former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

But Zahid Hossain, lead economist of World Bank Bangladesh, said the depreciation of Indian rupee has both advantages and disadvantages for Bangladesh.

"The competitiveness of Indian exporters will go up. On the other hand, Bangladesh imports a lot of raw materials such as fabrics and cotton for its garment industry. As a

result, our production cost will go down," he told The Daily Star.

The clouds forming in Asia as liquidity tightens and China's slowdown curbs demand for commodities and goods are fuelling a sell-off of emerging-market stocks, reversing a flow of money into the region in favour of nascent recoveries in the US and Europe, according to Bloomberg News.

"The eye of the storm is directly above emerging markets now, two years after it hovered over Europe and four years after it hit the US," said Stephen Jen, co-founder of hedge fund SLJ Macro Partners LLP in London.

"This could be serious for Asia."

The \$3.9 trillion of cash that flowed into emerging markets over the past four years has started to reverse since US Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke announced in June that the American central bank would start winding down its bond purchases later this year if the economy continues to improve as expected.

The plan has raised concerns among investors and some emerging economies about depreciation of currencies and possible financial instability.

"The emerging Asia

story is crumbling and dollar is once again the king," said Indranil Pan, chief economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank in Mumbai.

Foreign investors, who flooded into the region the past five years, are turning tail from places like Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, according to the Wall Street Journal.

"The pendulum is swinging back in favour of the advanced countries," said Shane Oliver, Sydney-based head of investment strategy at AMP Capital Investors Ltd.

"We've entered a tougher, more difficult period for Asia."

"It seems now the pain is going to be in the emerging markets," said Nitin Mathur, an analyst in Mumbai at Espirito Santo Investment Bank who expects sectors with higher valuations such as consumer goods to suffer the biggest declines.

One bright spot is Japan, which has seen its economy bounce back on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's fiscal and monetary stimulus.

"Asia still has potential in the next three years or more, but in the shorter term, momentum for business is slowing down," said Shuichi Hirukawa,

senior fund manager at Mizuho Asset Management Co. in Tokyo. "Investors may become more cautious."

The slowdown in economies such as Indonesia and Thailand is part of a "very, very global" weakness, World Bank Chief Economist Kaushik Basu told reporters in New Delhi yesterday.

"I don't think the Asian situation is any worse. In fact, if anything, Asia is probably better off than the rest of the world."

That may not help markets in Asia as money continues to flow back to Europe and the US, said Oliver at AMP Capital.

Stephen Schwartz, chief Asia economist for BBVA, said he does not think that the continent was facing crisis it saw in 1997.

"If the Asian financial crisis was a 10, I'd still be on a 3. My instinct is this is a short term portfolio adjustment that will pass."

"These episodes are comparable only in the sense that it was a period of big capital inflows and then outflows. But the underlying conditions are very different from 1997," the former International Monetary Fund official told the Wall Street Journal.

Syria strike imminent

FROM PAGE 1 the outlying Damascus suburb.

Rebels who control the area said the inspectors had travelled in a six-vehicle convoy to Eastern Ghouta yesterday, reported AFP.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said UN inspectors needed four days in total to conclude a probe into chemical weapons use in Syria.

"My mandate and my responsibility at this time is to conduct a thorough and complete investigation," Ban told reporters in The Hague yesterday.

But US officials aren't placing much stock in the UN mission. US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel told the BBC: "US forces are ready, if an order to strike comes down."

Senior US officials told NBC News on Tuesday that the US could hit Syria with three days of missile strikes, perhaps beginning Thursday [today].

US intelligence agencies are preparing a report laying out the evidence against Assad's government in last week's alleged chemical weapons attacks on civilians.

The classified version would be sent to key members of Congress and a declassified version would be released publicly, reported AP.

The White House said it's already convinced, however, and is planning a possible military response while rounding up support from international partners.

Meanwhile, Syrian Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi said yesterday his country would become a "graveyard of the invaders" if there were a military intervention.

Britain has drafted a UN Security Council resolution "condemning the chemical weapons attack by Assad and authorising necessary measures to protect civilians," UK Prime Minister David Cameron tweeted yesterday.

"The resolution will be put forward at the UN in New York later Wednesday [yesterday]," he said.

Cameron also announced that the National Security Council has agreed "unanimously that the use of chemical weapons by Assad was unacceptable -- and the world should not stand by" on Twitter.

The announcement came following his meeting with the military chiefs at Downing Street yesterday, reported The Independent.

Cameron will give the British parliament an opportunity to be seen to support his policy in a debate scheduled for today.

Britain will not take military action against the Syrian regime before United Nations inspectors report back on evidence of chemical weapons attacks, according to a motion published by the government yesterday that is set to be put to a parliamentary vote.

Lawmakers are due to vote on Britain's response to the attacks on today but any military action will require a

further vote of parliament's House of Commons after the UN experts report back, according to the motion.

The UN Security Council, of which Britain is a permanent member, should be immediately briefed as soon as the inspections are complete and then "every effort" should be made to secure a resolution from the Security Council backing military action, the motion said.

"The United Nations Security Council must have the opportunity immediately to consider that briefing and that every effort should be made to secure a Security Council Resolution backing military action before any such action is taken," it stated.

"Before any direct British involvement in such action a further vote of the House of Commons will take place."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said any attack would be folly. One of his deputies responded to Cameron by saying the UN Security Council should wait for the inspectors' report.

China, which also has a permanent seat in the UN, would probably also object to any military measures against Syria.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned of "graver conditions" should strikes be carried out.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle yesterday urged all members of the Security Council, especially

Russia, to back the resolution.

Along with Britain, France has also signalled it would join Western military intervention against forces supporting the Syrian president.

French President Francois Hollande said Tuesday that France is "ready to punish those who made the decision to gas these innocent people."

The French parliament will hold a session next week to debate the situation in Syria.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria "cannot go unanswered", Nato chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen said yesterday, adding that the 28-member military alliance will continue to consult on the issue.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation condemned alleged poison gas attacks in Syria, blaming the government and calling for "decisive action" in response.

UN and Arab League special envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi said yesterday "international law is clear" in requiring Council authorisation for any military action.

But Western leaders have made clear they are ready to do without it, citing precedents for foreign intervention to protect civilians.

Syria's war has killed more than 1,00,000 people and driven millions from their homes, many crossing borders into Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

Syria braces for tough response from the West

Foreign forces and bases in the Mediterranean and Middle East and selected Syrian military equipment

UN Security Council	Permanent members each have the power of veto
USA	For
Britain	For
France	For
Russia	Against
China	Against

Legend: Military base, Troops, Patriot missiles, NATO

Source: Pentagon, IISS, NATO