

SPIRITUAL LEADER OF ANSARULLAH BANGLA TEAM

Jasim says his students might have killed Rajib

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jasimuddin Rahmani, alleged spiritual leader of emergent militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team, yesterday said students inspired by his sermons might have killed blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider in February.

In a confessional statement before a magistrate, he said being a teacher of Mohammadpur Jamia Rahmania Arabia Madrasa, he used to preach to students making references to Hadith.

Besides, he had delivered sermons on the killing of atheists and those who demeaned Islam and the Prophet, at Bosila Madrasa Markajul Uloom Al-Islamia as its Khatib.



Jasimuddin Rahmani

University, college and school students used to attend those sessions since its founding in 2010.

Jasimuddin later realised that saying such things aloud in public was not right because there is law and court in the country. And if anyone, provoked by his speeches, does anything wrong, he will be tried under the law of the land, Jasimuddin said.

Metropolitan Magistrate Asaduzzaman Nur recorded the statement for three hours from 3:00pm after the Detective Branch of police brought Jasimuddin to his chamber.

He said he did not know who killed blogger Rajib on February 15 in the capital's

Pallabi. He had never spoken to them.

The killers might have been inspired by his sermons, said Jasimuddin, who studied in India and Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, five students arrested in Rajib's murder case said in their confessional statements that they had been influenced by Jasimuddin's speeches.

Jasimuddin also admitted writing books on Jihad and distributing them among madrasa students.

He was arrested on August 11 in Barguna for his alleged involvement in militant activities. He was then brought to Dhaka and placed on a six-day remand on August 27.

After his confessional statement yesterday, he was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

ATTACKS ON BUDDHIST TEMPLES

150 accused in 2 charge sheets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Teknaf police yesterday pressed charges in two of 19 cases filed for the attacks on Buddhist temples and houses in Ramu and Ukhia of the district in September last year.

The two charge sheets were submitted to the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court, accusing 150 people of the attacks.

Five other charge sheets had been submitted the previous night in connection with the cases. One of them was submitted by Ramu Police Station and two each by Ukhia and Cox's Bazar police stations.

Cox's Bazar Superintendent of Police Md Azad Miah said investigations into the other 12 cases were at the final stage, adding that the charge sheets in these cases would be submitted in the next month.

Police said they had finalised on Thursday the charge sheets of seven of the cases against 362 people for looting, arson and vandalism in Ramu and Ukhia upazilas.

Islamist fanatics ransacked, looted and burnt 12 Buddhist temples in Ramu on the night of September 29. They also looted 50 houses and torched 15 of them in Buddhist villages.

The religious bigots set fire to five Buddhist temples and ransacked two Hindu temples in Ukhia the next day. They also attacked a Buddhist village in Teknaf and ransacked 11 houses there on the same day.

The attacks were apparently triggered by a Facebook posting of an anti-Islam photograph tagged to a fake account of a Buddhist youth on the social networking site.

Thirteen of the cases were filed by police while the rest by the victims.

A total of 375 people were accused and 14,807 shown as suspects in the cases. Police have so far arrested 187 of the accused and 339 of the suspects.

Of the arrestees, 23 have already confessed to their involvement in the attacks.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to visit Ramu and Ukhia today to inaugurate the Buddhist temples that have recently been reconstructed.

Contempt notice

FROM PAGE 1

for the Asia Division Storm Tiv to respond within three weeks as to why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for tarnishing the dignity of the tribunal.

On August 16, HRW in an article in its website claimed that the trial of Ghulam Azam at the Tribunal-1 had been "deeply flawed" and "it had not met the international standards".

It said the "judges had improperly conducted an investigation on behalf of the prosecution" and expressed concern over "collusion and bias among prosecutors and judges".

The report also said the Human Rights Watch also expressed concern over the "failure to take steps to protect defence witnesses", and "lack of evidence to establish guilt beyond reasonable doubt".

On July 5, Ghulam Azam was handed down 90 years for crimes against humanity and genocide committed during the Liberation War.

The Tribunal-1 Chairman Justice ATM Fazle Kabir yesterday said there were sufficient grounds to draw up contempt proceedings against HRW and the two officials.

The judge said the respondents in their article had made five illegal comments about the trial process even after knowing that two appeals were pending with the

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

"Thus, they have illegally intervened in the judicial process of an independent country," said Justice Kabir.

Ghulam Azam has appealed against the tribunal verdict while the state has appealed seeking capital punishment.

The tribunal said, "The opposite parties neither made an enquiry into the matter to find out truth nor did they attend the tribunal to observe trial process of Azam's case but they hypothetically made biased, baseless, fabricated and scandalous report in the article with intent to create hatred about the performances of the judges and thereby making the whole trial process questionable.

"The opposite parties have deliberately as well as unethically cast a slur on the dignity and reputation of the judges by their scandalous report in their official website which have tarnished the image and honor of the judges of the tribunal in the estimation of the people at home and abroad."

If proved, the accused could have to serve one year in jail or pay Tk 5,000 in fine or both.

The court yesterday fixed September 30 for issuing an order regarding the petition, which the prosecution had filed on August 22.

Texting pill

FROM PAGE 16

are wasted each year as well as alert family members if medication isn't being taken properly by elderly relatives.

Each pill contains a sensor that transmits a signal to a patch worn by the patient when the sensor itself hits the stomach acid after being swallowed.

This patch then sends the data via text message or e-mail, showing that the pill has been taken.

The sensor is the size of a grain of sand and is embedded into the pill alongside copper and magnesium which make an electrical circuit when they come into contact with stomach acid, much like a potato battery.

This electrical circuit powers the sensor.

Andrew Thompson, chief executive officer at US firm Proteus Digital Health which has developed the digital pill, said: "When you swallow one of our digital drugs it will say, 'Hello I'm here, I'm Novartis, I'm Diovan, 1.2mg, I'm from plant number 76, I'm batch number 12 and I'm pill number two.'"

He claims the invention could help families monitor elderly relatives who may get confused taking multiple pills. Oxford University has also been involved in the pilot of the drug.

Scientists are hoping to start a UK trial next year using the texting pills with heart failure patients.

Son defends accused Alim

FROM PAGE 16

Sazzad, third and last defence witness in the case, also testified at the International Crimes Tribunal-2 that Alim was involved with neither Peace Committee nor Razakar force in 1971.

Forty-eight-year-old Sazzad claimed his father had taken part in the Language Movement in 1952 and had to go to jail for that. Alim was a member of Joypurhat Sarbodalaya Sangram Parishad in 1971, he added.

During his three-hour testimony, Sazzad exhibited 23 pieces of documentary evidence including books, newspaper reports and certificates to defend his 83-year-old father.

Alim, a former BNP lawmaker, is facing 17 charges for his alleged involvement in the crimes against humanity and genocide committed in Joypurhat during the nine-month-long war.

After his testimony, prosecutor Rana Dasgupta started cross-examining the defence witness before the two-member tribunal of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Shahinur Islam adjourned the proceeding.

Sazzad is set to face further cross-examination today.

Sazzad, a businessman,

said his father was born in India in 1930 and studied up to degree level in Kolkata. He later completed his master's in 1951 and LLB in 1953 from Dhaka University.

As a DU student, his father had taken part in the Language Movement and was behind bars for many days, claimed Sazzad.

"My father Abdul Alim is a Language Movement veteran."

Sazzad, who was six in 1971, said they had lived in Bogra until March 1971 and gone to their own home in Joypurhat on March 29/30 after Pakistani army entered Bogra on March 27.

He claimed his father had gone into hiding after sending them to Aushgara, a village close to their home, on April 16/17. A few days later they had taken shelter at Musa Moulana's house in Hanai village.

His father had also taken shelter at that house, claimed Sazzad.

He said Pakistani army had first entered Joypurhat on April 24, but according to the prosecution, the date was April 20.

The prosecution said Alim had established an army camp, peace committee office and training centre for Razakars by occupying the trading office of Shaonlal Bajla in Joypurhat.

But Sazzad yesterday

claimed his father had a good rapport with Shaonlal.

He also claimed his father was not involved with Peace Committee or Razakar force. He added no newspapers in 1971 published reports against his father.

Sazzad further said the Awami League government had appointed his father as the director of Joypurhat Sugar Mill in 1974.

But a defence petition, which said Alim was behind bars in 1974, contradicted Sazzad's claim.

The petition said in January 1974 Alim was arrested in an emergency order under the Security Act and was released on August 6, 1975.

Sazzad said his father was elected Joypurhat municipality chairman in 1975 and 1977, chairman of Joypurhat sadar upazila in 1985 and 1990, a parliament member in 1979, 1996 and 2001 from BNP and president of Joypurhat District Bar Association twice.

Alim became a member of president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet in 1978.

Meanwhile, the tribunal adjourned the case proceeding against Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan until September 5 as the prosecution failed to produce their witnesses yesterday.

Hurt deep down Buddhist heart

FROM PAGE 1

bodies, to welcome the prime minister.

"The very sight of the main culprits walking free stokes our fears," Tarun Barua, leader of local Buddhist community and general secretary of Ramu Sima Bihar told The Daily Star on Saturday, nearly a year after the attacks.

Islamist fanatics vandalised and torched Buddhist temples and houses in Ramu and Ukhia of Cox's Bazar on September 29 and 30 last year, following a fake Facebook post that demeaned the Quran.

The locals, who are still haunted by the horrors of the mayhem, have expressed their gratitude to the prime minister and the administration for the rehabilitation of the victims and reconstruction of the temples.

They say the mayhem ripped apart a communal harmony built over centuries

and left a deep wound that would take more time to heal.

"It was more important to get to the bottom of the incident than the rehabilitation of the victims. Otherwise, how such attacks can be stopped?" said Proggamitra Bhikkhu of Sima Bihar.

Pandit Satyapriyo Mahathero, a leader of the Buddhist community, said, "Nothing can make up for the damage and torching of historical and rare objects, the Tripitak and other valuable books on religion."

Alok Barua, a bank official, told The Daily Star that the peace-loving Buddhists still pass their days in utter insecurity, as the masterminds and instigators of the attacks have not been arrested yet.

The local Buddhist community provided the superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar with a list of 12 key perpetrators of the attacks, but they are still at large, he said.

A judicial enquiry led by Chittagong District and Sessions Judge Abdul Quddus Miah found 298 people involved in the attacks, while a government committee headed by Additional Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong M Nurul Islam identified 205 people, who were allegedly involved in the attacks.

The Daily Star has learnt that the names of the 12 persons are on both the lists.

Of them, Nurul Islam Selim, ex-president of Bangladesh Chharta League Ramu unit, tops the list of the accused prepared by the judicial enquiry team and seconds the other list made by the government body. But he is yet to be arrested.

His photos can be seen in festoons and banners that are hung in Ramu to welcome the prime minister.

The lists of accused also include general secretary of

Sramik League's Ramu unit Yunus Rana Chowdhury and BCL activist Joynul Abedin Bhutto.

Two other accused -- local BNP leaders Kamal Uddin and Asfar Kamal -- also roam free. They both are union parishad members.

However, names of none of the 12 persons were mentioned in the charge sheets of seven of the 19 cases filed for the attacks and looting of the Buddhist temples and houses in Ramu and Ukhia. Police submitted the charge sheets to judicial magistrate courts on Sunday and yesterday.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of the temples could do little to allay their fears, said many of the victims in Merungloa village of Ramu, where Border Guard Bangladesh built new houses for 15 affected families.

The village witnessed acts of arson, vandalism and loot-

ing on September 29 last year.

The miscreants used to hurl bricks at their houses and lock them from outside just a few months back, but it stopped after they informed police, said one of the victims, asking not to be named.

Suresh Barua, president of Ramu unit of Bangladesh Buddhist Association, was of the opinion that the fear of the victims would not go away unless measures are taken to ensure their safety.

Ramu Kendriya Bouddha Oikya and Kalyan Parishad wrote to the prime minister on August 24 and recommended setting up a permanent administrative cell on security of Buddhist monasteries.

They suggested that the cell should include members of the army and Border Guard Bangladesh and representatives of local administration and the Buddhist community.

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A year on, Sonali mulls

FROM PAGE 1

The attorneys last month suggested the bank should sue Hall-Mark at least for the loans it had granted to the business group in 2010. Otherwise, the lender might face problems in realising the money after passing of three years.

"Cases have to be filed by this year so that it doesn't become time-barred," said a Sonali Bank official.

The board on Thursday instructed the management to present before it in the next meeting detailed information on the loans and the timeframe for filing the cases, he added.

LAWYERS' OPINION

The attorneys advised the bank to file cases with the Artha Rin Adalat, money suit with the civil court and also criminal cases to recover the swindled

money. They also recommended suing Sonali Bank officials so that the embezzled amount can be recovered by selling their (bankers) assets.

They stressed the need for tracing the movable and immovable properties of all those involved in the forgery to satisfy the judgement debt.

About rescheduling of loans, the lawyers noted that the scope for rescheduling was very slim. However, they said the bank can consider rescheduling only if the owners of Hall-Mark Group take responsibility for the crime by putting their signs on non-judicial stamps and pledge collateral for the loans.

The bank authorities should seek opinion from the court as to whether rescheduling

was possible and the confession of the Hall-Mark officials, now behind bars, about the swindled money has to be taken through the ACC, observed the lawyers.

The board of directors, said another Sonali Bank official, in three special meetings have discussed the opinions of the six lawyers. In its next meeting, the board might decide on filing cases.

According to the Sonali Bank's latest data, the Hall-Mark Group took loans of Tk2,964 crore, of which it has already adjusted Tk410 crore. As a result, the company owed Tk2,554 crore to the bank till June 30.

A Sonali Bank evaluation has valued the land pledged by the group as collateral for the loan at Tk1,146 crore.

Syria asks UN to stop US strike

FROM PAGE 16

"The Middle East is a powder keg, and the fire is approaching today," he told French newspaper Le Figaro.

Syria has repeatedly denied being behind an August 21 chemical weapons attack that killed hundreds of people.

Iran has told the UN it is prepared to find a "peaceful resolution" to the crisis in ally Syria, as the threat of a US strike looms, state media said yesterday.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif relayed the message to Secretary Ban Ki-moon during a phone conversation late Sunday, state broadcaster IRIB said on its website, AFP

reported. Meanwhile, Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad told the BBC any US military action against Syria would amount to "support for al-Qaeda and its affiliates".

He also said armed groups backed by America - not Syrian troops - had used chemical weapons.

US military action will be put to a vote in Congress, which ends its summer recess on September 9, giving President Bashar al-Assad time to prepare the ground for any assault and try to rally international support against the use of force.

In a letter to UN chief Ban

Ki-moon and President of the Security Council Maria Cristina Perceval, Syrian UN envoy Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari called on "the UN Secretary General to shoulder his responsibilities for preventing any aggression on Syria and pushing forward reaching a political solution to the crisis in Syria", state news agency SANA said yesterday.

He called on the Security Council to "maintain its role as a safety valve to prevent the absurd use of force out of the frame of international legitimacy".

Ja'afari said the United States should "play its role, as a peace sponsor and as a

partner to Russia in the preparation for the international conference on Syria and not as a state that uses force against whoever opposes its policies".

US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday that tests showed sarin nerve gas was fired on rebel-held areas on August 21.

Ja'afari said Kerry had "adopted old stories fabricated by terrorists" based on fake photos from the Internet.

Meanwhile, Russia is totally unconvinced by evidence presented by the United States and its allies of an alleged chemical attack outside Damascus that the

reconnaissance ship left Russia's naval base in the Ukrainian Black Sea port of Sevastopol late on Sunday on a mission "to gather current information in the area of the escalating conflict", the Interfax report quoted an unidentified military source as saying.

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