students of Chhatra League at Chittagong University (CU), Shibir was waiting for an issue to pick on. They tried to destabilise the situation in the CU area."

As the Alia madrassah was closed at the time when the agitation surfaced, locals say that the student body of Jamaat was behind the anarchy. The Hathazari incident, moreover, has a direct link to the rise of Hefajat-e-Islam. After the violence in Hathazari, police arrested the perpetrators but with the help of Hefajat leader Ahmed Shafi, they were let out on bail. According to Hefajat-e-Islam leaders, Ahmed Shafi met with the prime minister to release them from jail. And this helped Hefajat gain popularity among the Muslim community of Hathazari.

The Hathazari incident was the starting point of religious terrorism of Jamaat in recent years. Soon the violence covered the whole country, most importantly in the border area of Bangladesh and India. In March and April, several Hindu and a few Muslim households (who had tried to help their Hindu neighbours) at Fatepur and Chakdaha in Satkhira, were attacked. At least 12 houses were burned down to ashes and two villages were ransacked during the two-day long vandalism in the area.

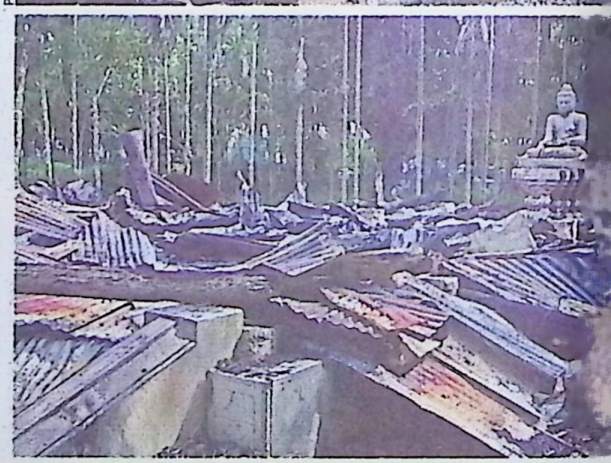
Anger mounted in the Muslim community when Drishtipat, a local Jamaat-e-Islami patronised newspaper, spread a rumour that a school play in the village had made indecent remarks about the Prophet. The local newspaper reportedly circulated complimentary copies of the paper to different houses, bazaars and mosques. By March 30, the news had spread and people started protesting in different villages. *The Star* has obtained earlier copies of Drishtipat from 2011, which show that the newspaper had spread similar propaganda in the past to incite violence against the religious minorities living in the area.

In the same year in September, at least 22 temples and several hundred houses and shops of the pre-dominantly Buddhist communities, as well as the Hindus were attacked, vandalised, looted and burnt down by a section of Muslims.

Blaming Uttam Kumar Barua, a Buddhist youth, for insulting the Quran through a social networking site, religious fanatics on the night of September 29, 2012, launched attacks on a predominantly Buddhist neighbourhood at Ramu in Cox's Bazar. Amid government-claimed 'tight security' in the minority groups' religious institutions, the attacks later spread to Ukhia, Teknaf and



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



Ramu October 1, 2012.



PHOTOS: STAR FILE

Dinajpur January 5, 2014.



Hathazari February 8, 2012.