

Ashram vandalised, looted in Dinajpur

Cops term it robbery; locals believe it's attack on Hindus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Unidentified criminals attacked and vandalised a hundred-year-old ashram, a Hindu spiritual hermitage, at Garnurpur village of Dinajpur's Kaharol upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The miscreants also looted valuables from the Shreenigomananda Sarswat Sebashram, home to 30 orphans and 10 spiritual elders, and beat up a minor orphan, triggering panic among the local Hindus.

Though police consider this as a robbery attempt, the ashram authority believes it was a communal attack.

Founded in 1992, the ashram, which runs on donations, also provides free medical services to the poor people of the area.

Witnesses say a group of 10 to 15 people wearing masks and equipped with sharp weapons stormed inside the ashram complex around 4:00am and broke into the diagnostic laboratory hall. They ransacked the room and took away a laptop and a microscope.

The miscreants also severely beat up a 14-year-old orphan named Budu Hasda when he panicked and started screaming.

The culprits then went to the prayer house inside the complex, ransacked it and looted some brass utensils.

They, however, fled the spot as other people inside the ashram woke up.

Nandadulal Chakraborty, the chief of the ashram, immediately informed Kaharol Police Station of the incident. However, the law enforcers did not show up before 8:00am Thursday, though the ashram was only half-an-hour's drive from the police station.

Talking to reporters, Nandadulal claimed that the attack was aimed at offending religious sentiments.

"They could leave the place after taking the laptop and utensils if it were a robbery. Instead, they got inside the prayer house and ransacked it, tarnishing the sanctity of the place," he said.

"I do not think it was a robbery. There were many valuables they could take, but they only took a laptop and some utensils. They destroyed the sanctity of the temple by ransacking it," Ramani Kanta Roy, a medical technologist of the ashram, told The Daily Star.

Dinajpur's Deputy Commissioner Ahmed Shamim Al Razi and Superintendent of Police Ruhul Amin visited the ashram around 12:00 noon.

The district administration assured the panicked people that criminals must be arrested.

A local police official, seeking anonymity, told The Daily Star that they believed it was a robbery attempt, not a communal attack.

The ashram authority filed a case with Kaharol Police Station accusing 10-15 unnamed criminals. None, however, was arrested yet.



People throng the ashram at Garnurpur of Kaharol in Dinajpur after criminals vandalised and looted it of its valuables early yesterday. Inset, a vandalised temple inside the ashram.

Fresh agitation after upazila election Decides BNP standing committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the end of upazila election in May, the BNP-led 19-party alliance will wage an all-out movement for a fresh national election under a non-partisan administration.

The BNP standing committee came up with this decision at a meeting held at its chief Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office last night, party sources said.

"At the meeting, some leaders opined that we should give six or nine months' ultimatum to the government for holding a fresh election while some said it would be too early for the new administration to organise any new polls," a standing committee member present at the meeting told The Daily Star. "Finally, madam [Khaleda] concluded we will call upon the government to hold a fresh election under a non-partisan administration as early as possible."

At the meet, Khaleda also asked all the senior leaders to engage in the electioneering to ensure the win of BNP-backed candidates in the upazila parishad polls.

"If we cannot perform well in the upazila election, the government will say we would have lost the January 5 election had we participated in it. So we have taken this election seriously," another BNP leader said.

Third phase

FROM PAGE 2

Rangpur-6 and around Tk 5 lakh in Gopalganj-3, according to the reports of her election expenses submitted to the returning officers.

An AL delegation yesterday submitted two copies of the reports to the secretary of the EC Secretariat, said sources in the EC.

As per the electoral law, all the newly elected MPs will have to submit reports of their election expenses to the returning officers and a copy to the EC Secretariat within 30 days after publication of the gazette notification of the election result.

EC officials said they had the information that about 140 candidates had submitted the reports until yesterday evening.

Mosharraf

FROM PAGE 1

member Mosharraf and his wife Bilkis Akhter with Lloyds TSB Offshore Private Banking, St Peterport, Guernsey, Channel Island, GY 14EN, UK.

While talking to The Daily Star, Nasim said Bilkis was not accused in the case, but her role would be verified during the case investigation. "We suspect that Khandaker got the amount as bribes, which was received in the UK," he said, adding that the bank account now remains frozen.

According to the case statement, a report of Financial Investigation Unit, Bailiwick of Guernsey, UK stated the money had been deposited in the bank account through money laundering.

Earlier, attorney general of Bangladesh on behalf of the ACC sent an MLAR (Mutual Legal Assistance Request) to his UK counterpart, seeking necessary information about the money laundering. The UK Attorney General's Office later responded with the information, Nasim mentioned.

He also added that the BNP leader and his wife did not mention the amount in their income tax return.

The anti-graft body had started its preliminary investigation into the allegation of the corruption in late 2012.

The commission yesterday finally lodged the case against the BNP leader under money laundering act and foreign exchange control act-1947.

India offers visa on arrival

FROM PAGE 1

difficulties and have to spend a considerable amount of time for getting Indian visa. Around 5 lakh Bangladeshis, a large number of who are tourists, visit India every year.

The Indian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday said there were no changes in the current visa procedures, and it advised Bangladeshi nationals to follow the procedures for visiting India.

Eight countries have been kept out of the single-entry visa-on-arrival facility, meant for purposes other than paid employment and education with a one-month time limit. Those are Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Somalia.

"We have decided to extend visa-on-arrival to tourists from 180 nations. It will take five to six months to put the infrastructure in place," India's Junior Minister for Planning and Parliamentary Affairs Rajiv Shukla told reporters after a Planning Commission meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday.

"It is a major move and we hope it will

boost tourism in a big way. We hope to implement this from the next tourist season starting October," said the minister.

The facility could later be extended to business visa seekers, Shukla said.

The Indian minister said the proposal was cleared at the meeting attended by Deputy Chairman of the Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh and other senior officials.

India currently provides the facility to 11 countries, including New Zealand, Singapore, Luxembourg, Japan, Vietnam and Finland.

Foreign tourist arrivals in India stood at 6.84 million in 2013, and the latest decision to extend visa-on-arrival is expected to provide a major boost to the number of tourists.

To begin with, necessary infrastructure will be put in place around 26 airports, including those in Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, to provide the facility.

A website will be launched for extending the facility to foreigners intending to visit

India as tourists.

They will need to fill a simple form, pay the required fee with a bank card and apply for visa on the designated website. And they will be issued with electronic travel authorisation within three days.

On arrival in India, a simple biometric identification will be done at the airport. If anyone wants to extend his stay beyond 30 days, he will have to get another visa from the authorities.

The Indian High Commission in Dhaka issued a press release yesterday to clarify the reports in the Indian media on the future changes in visa procedures.

A spokesperson for the High Commission said the current visa procedures remained unchanged as far as Bangladesh was concerned.

The present online system for all visa applications continues, and if any change is made to the existing system, it will be made public through announcements, added the spokesperson.

Probe body asks for action committee

FROM PAGE 20

Sanaul told The Daily Star yesterday.

He mentioned an inter-ministerial committee was formed to get the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman extradited.

The same way, this monitoring cell will work to know the whereabouts of the fugitives and oversee the process of their execution.

On January 21, 2013, the International Crimes Tribunal-2 passed a death sentence for expelled Jamaat member Abul Kalam Azad, also known as Bachchu Razakar, for committing crimes against humanity and genocide during the Liberation War, 1971.

He had gone into hiding hours before the tribunal issued his arrest warrant on April 3, 2012.

On November 3 last year, the tribunal handed down death penalty to Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan for the killing of 18 intellectuals during the