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.

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

Nandadulal Chakraborty, the chief of the ashram,

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.

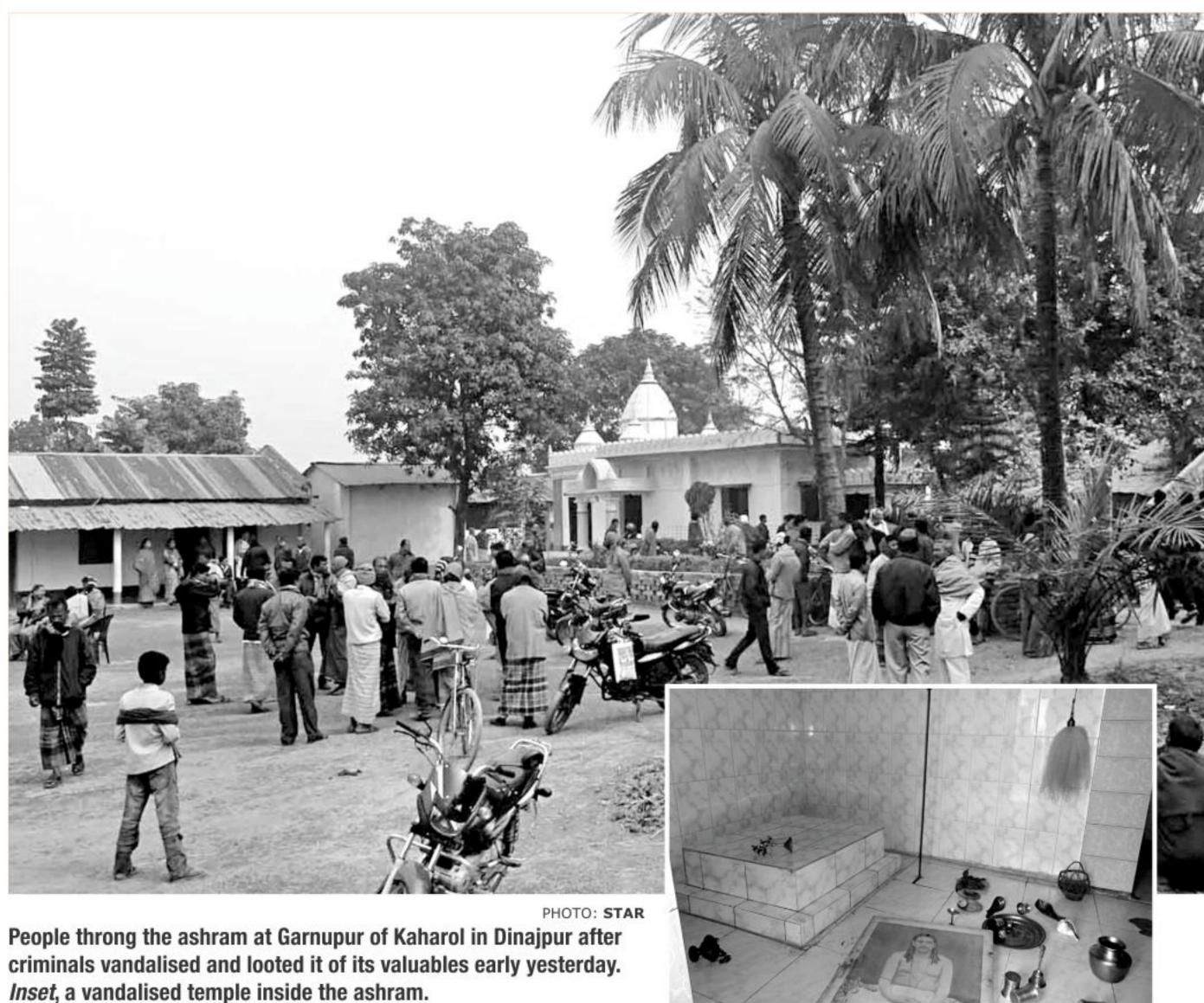
"I do not think it was a robbery. There were many valuables they could take, but they only took a laptop and some utensils. They destroyed the sanctity of the temple by ransacking it," Ramani Kanta Roy, a medical technologist of the ashram, told The Daily Star.

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.



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

Third phase

seriously," another BNP leader said.

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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

act-1947.

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

Fresh agitation 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-onarrival 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

Sanaul told The Daily Star yesterday.

He mentioned an inter-ministerial com-

mittee was formed to get the fugitive killers

of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

work to know the whereabouts of the fugi-

tives and oversee the process of their execu-

The same way, this monitoring cell will

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

the tribunal issued his arrest warrant on

He had gone into hiding hours before

genocide during the Liberation War, 1971.

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

Mueen and Ashraf have been living in UK

Faridpur BNP leader Zahid Hossain

In the letter, the probe body said the tri-

and US for last few decades. Bangladesh has

no extradition treaty with the two countries.

Khokon is also being tried in absentia by

Probe body asks for action committee

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 trave 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.

In this context, a monitoring cell should

The eight-member cell will include the

be formed to help the police headquarters

and oversee the processes for execution, the

DGFI or his representative, director general

of NSI or his representative, representatives of

HC now to hear

FROM PAGE 20

yesterday, protesting the death penalty to its chief Motiur Rahman Nizami in the case.

However, the shutdown did not cause any inconvenience to people as they ignored the call. No major untoward incident was reported from the capital and elsewhere in the country. Supreme Court Registrar AKM Shamsul

Islam told The Daily Star the dispatch section of the HC received the case records from the officials concerned of the Chittagong court. The death reference section of the HC will

now register the case as a death reference, and will prepare a paper book containing all documents, evidence, and statements placed before the trial court, he said.

After that the HC will hold hearing on the death reference, he added.

The registrar also said the convicts of the case could file separate appeals with the HC challenging their convictions within 30 days of the date of delivery of the lower court judgement.

The HC may hold analogous hearing of the death reference and appeals of the convicts, he added

A total of 398 death references other than that of the 10-truck arms haul case are now pending with the HC, and it has disposed of five death reference cases so far this year, sources at the Supreme Court said.

On January 30, Judge SM Mojibur Rahman of Chittagong Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 handed down the death penalty to 14 people, including ex-ministers Nizami and Lutfozzaman Babar for smuggling 10 truck-

loads of firearms in 2004. The 14 convicts were also given life term imprisonment in another case filed for possessing illegal firearms.

During yesterday's hartal, a large number of businesses, offices and roadside shops were seen open while a huge number of motor-

ised vehicles plied the Dhaka streets. Long-route buses were, however, off the roads, but movement of trains, launches and

planes remained quite normal. In Rajshahi city, activists of Islami Chhatra

Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat, hurled a crude bomb at a pick-up carrying police personnel. But no one was injured. Pro-hartal pickets put blockades at differ-

ent points on Dhaka-Pabna highway while Jamaat-Shibir men vandalised wind screen of a truck at Thanthania in Bogra.

In Chandpur, a mobile court sentenced five Jamaat-Shibir activists to one-month imprisonment each as they were picketing during hartal hours.

49kg gold

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around 8:30pm, said Mosear Rahman, assistant commissioner of the Airport Customs.

"The crewmen told us that something was lying under seats," he said, adding that the customs officials then found those bars in cushions under a number of seats.

Warning

FROM PAGE 20

Pyongyang against dashing the hopes of separated family members in the North and

In a statement broadcast on state television, the North's top military body, the National Defence Commission (NDC), said it ahead with the joint military exercises when cross-border efforts were being made for reconciliation.

"Dialogue and exercises of war of aggression... cannot go hand in hand," the NDC said.

The annual South-US joint drills are scheduled to begin late February, despite the North's repeated demands for their cancellation.

The dates agreed Wednesday for the family reunions were February 20-25, which would likely see them overlap with the start of the

It would be the first reunion event in more than three years, and the accord was hailed as

RU at fault

April 3, 2012.

FROM PAGE 20

extradited.

and allowances of the teachers and employees appointed since 2001. Over the last 13 years, the university has appointed about 2,200 staff, 900 of them teachers, without approval from the UGC, said RU sources.

Of the 2,200, as many as 544 were recruited mainly on political consideration in 2006, whipping up widespread criticisms. All the 544 are now getting salaries and allowances, as the UGC eventually granted the money.

"The UGC knows we have to pay all the recruited staff even if we have to borrow. Yet it didn't grant the fund [for the 344 recruited in 2012-13]. This prompted the university to think about raising its own income," an official of the university said, requesting anonymity.

Asked, Prof Mohammed Nasser of statistics department said the UGC asked all the universities to cut expenditure and increase own incomes, but the RU went for increasing both.

"They [authorities] are increasing expenditures by recruiting staff for creating their political stronghold, ultimately putting the financial burden on the students and their guardians," he added. Pro-VC Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan said

increasing fees and launching evening courses to raise income were nothing new. He claimed the wholesale recruitment of

teachers and other staff in 2001 had caused the fund shortage, which prompted the authorities to think of creating their own fund.

In 2007-08, the authorities increased most fees and launched evening courses for Business Studies Faculty. Similar courses at law and social science faculties were launched in

the issue, especially the execution of the two convicted killers of intellectuals, it said.

Sweden.

"But the officials of the investigation

discussed among victim families, civil soci-

ety members and in foreign and local

media. There is a lot of public interest about

agency, prosecutors and even the officials of the law and home ministries cannot provide correct information as they are not fully

the chief prosecutor of the tribunal and the bunal directed the inspector general of police (IGP) to execute the verdicts, but it investigation agency. Additional secretary (political) of home was "almost impossible" without the assis-

letter read.

the Tribunal-2. He is reportedly living in IGP, foreign secretary, director general of

aware of the latest developments."

ministry will work as the member secretary The execution of the verdicts is much of the cell, as per the proposal. Sanaul Huq added an additional pro-

posal will be placed to include a representative from the law ministry. Contacted, Senior Home Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed said they were examining

its possible organogram. The cell will be

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

tance of other ministries and agencies.

formed any time, he added.

2010, he added.

protests by the students.

However, the university had to suspend the courses for social science faculty following

Prof Nasser said the teachers involved in the evening courses earn additional money. So the current pro-Awami League administration thought of making some extra bucks. Some pro-opposition teachers also supported them to gain from the fee hikes.

For every lecture in the evening course, a teacher gets Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 instantly, said another RU official.

The two-year evening course costs a student between Tk 1 lakh and Tk 1.10 lakh. The faculty concerned takes 75 percent of the money to share among the teachers and staff and the rest goes to the university fund, he added. Since 2007, the RU thus raised a fund of Tk

crore from evening courses at the accounting, banking and finance, management, marketing and law departments. And introducing similar programmes in other departments will help the authorities further raise the fund, the official said. He also said another Tk 20 lakh would tions, we cannot do anything," he told The

have been added to the fund annually had the increased fees come into effect. RU sources said the four-year honours and sities from doing such things, he added.

one-year master's programmes cost a resident student around Tk 30,000 and a non-resident student about Tk 25,000. Contacted, RU Vice-chancellor Prof

Muhammad Mizanuddin said, "We are running short of money and the decision [to increase fees] was taken to ease pressure on the budget."

The RU budget will have a deficit of Tk 12 crore this year, as the authorities have to pay Tk 5 crore in teachers' remunerations for exam duties, due since 2010.

The VC said the fees were increased as per the recommendations of the respective committees that found these were not raised over a long time. And the evening courses were introduced following recommendations of the departments concerned, faculty's proposal and the academic council's approval.

About large-scale recruitments, he said the authorities appointed teachers since there was a shortage. UGC Chairman Prof AK Azad Chowdhury

said the recruitment of 1,023 staff was not done in line with the rules. The UGC objected to the appointment of the 344 teachers and staff and did not allocate

added. "But we cannot cancel the recruitment as it will be interfering in the functions of an autonomous institution. It is the syndicate that makes such decisions. When the university approves the recruitments despite our objec-

Contacted, Education Minister Nurul Islam

But the UGC always discourages the univer-

Daily Star.

Nahid said he was not aware of the irregularities in recruitments, but he would look into the matter. "Universities must do everything in line

with the laws. We have fund shortages, and these institutions have to keep that in mind while spending the money," he added.

South. money for their salaries and allowances, he

was "outrageous" for South Korea to push

military exercises.

a possible harbinger of warmer ties between