

Hindu house torched over land dispute

Man uses mosque loudspeaker to incite locals to make the attack
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The house of a Hindu family was torched by a group of people at Barokot village in Golapganj upazila of Sylhet on Saturday evening. The attackers also allegedly assaulted the women and children of the family. Witnesses said Akbar Ali and Ripon Deb had disputes over the ownership of a piece of land. On Saturday evening, the two had an altercation and at one stage, Akbar ran to a nearby mosque. He then announced through the mosque's loudspeaker that Ripon had made derogatory comments about Islam. He also incited the locals to gather and attack Ripon's house. Some people, led by Akbar, then vandalised Ripon's house and set fire to it. They also assaulted the family members, the witnesses said, adding that police took unusually long to arrive at the scene. The local police, however, refuted the allegation of slow response. "We were informed by local union parishad member Mokbul Hossain and we rushed to the spot immediately. The place of incident is around 7 kilometres from the police station, so the mob got enough time to vandalise and set fire to the house," said Officer-in-charge Fazlul Haque Shibhy of Golapganj Police Station. Ripon's father Nagendra Deb yesterday filed a case against Akbar Ali and 14 others, the OC added.

The local police, however, refuted the allegation of slow response. "We were informed by local union parishad member Mokbul Hossain and we rushed to the spot immediately. The place of incident is around 7 kilometres from the police station, so the mob got enough time to vandalise and set fire to the house," said Officer-in-charge Fazlul Haque Shibhy of Golapganj Police Station. Ripon's father Nagendra Deb yesterday filed a case against Akbar Ali and 14 others, the OC added.

Lightning kills 3 madrasa students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three madrasa students were killed after being struck by lightning in Purbadhala upazila of Netrakona last night. Mohammad Masum, 14, Rafat and Masum, both 15, were residential students of Ghagra Chourasta Foyzur Uloom Madrasa in Purba Dhala. Abdur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Purbadhala Police Station, said the victims were hit by a thunderbolt around 9:00pm. They were standing in a queue for the toilets on the madrasa premises.



A girl exhibiting her self-defence techniques at a protest programme in front of Chittagong Press Club. **Top right**, MC College students form a human chain in front of Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar, and **bottom right**, a Gonojagoron Mancha faction spokesperson Imran H Sarkar speaking at a road march on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Gauripur bus stop in Comilla's Daudkandi. The programmes were organised yesterday demanding justice for Sohagi Jahan Tonu who was killed inside Comilla Cantonment area on March 20. PHOTO: STAR



Voice for justice gets louder

FROM PAGE 1
Bangla yesterday that they were yet to receive the autopsy report. The case was handed over to the DB on Sunday. Two delegations of rights bodies Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association visited the crime scene yesterday. They also talked to Tonu's family. The district police chief on Saturday had told BBC Bangla that they were facing "some limitations" while probing the murder, as the crime scene is in a restricted area like cantonment. **THE MANCHA MARCH** The Gonojagoron Mancha held a brief rally at Shahbagh in the capital before starting the march to Comilla at 10:00am. Activists of left-leaning student bodies Bangladesh Chhatra Union and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front joined the programme. After reaching Comilla town in the afternoon, they held a rally.

Speaking there, Imran H Sarkar said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took to the street demanding justice for Yasmin. "We want her to take steps over Tonu murder incident as well," he said. The Mancha also announced hour-long strikes at all educational institutions of the country and formation of a human chain from 12:00pm on Wednesday. **BNP SLAMS GOVT** BNP leaders yesterday criticised the government and Sheikh Hasina for "their silence" over the murder of Tonu. "Tonu's killers feel encouraged as the government high-ups including the prime minister are silent over the issue," BNP Standing Committee Member ASM Hannan Shah said at a human chain in front of the Jatitya Press Club. At another human chain in the same venue, another BNP standing committee member, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, alleged people are not safe anywhere in the country. The killings of people like Tonu and

journalist couple Sagar-Runi happened due to the absence of good governance in the country, he said. **MORE PROTESTS** Dhaka University students formed a human chain at TSC on the campus and blocked the Shahbagh intersection for around half an hour in the afternoon, demanding immediate arrest of the killer(s) of Tonu. Students of East West University, North South University and Stamford University also brought out processions, protesting the murder. In Chittagong, several thousand people formed a human chain and staged demonstrations in front of the Chittagong Press Club in the afternoon, demanding capital punishment for the culprit(s). Similar protest programmes were held in Mymensingh, Narayanganj and Pirojpur. [Our correspondents in Comilla, Mymensingh, Pirojpur, Narayanganj and Chittagong contributed to this story.]

Kohli magic

FROM PAGE 1
inaugural tournament in 2007, now face the West Indies in the semi-finals in Mumbai on Thursday after finishing second in the Super 10 group stage. But Australia's hopes of winning their first ever World T20 trophy are once again in tatters, with the top-ranked Test side now bowing out of the tournament. New Zealand play England in the other semi-final on Wednesday in New Delhi. Chasing Australia's challenging total, India had looked down and out at 94-4 but Kohli and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (18 not out) put on 67 runs to take the team to the finish line. The 27-year-old Kohli planned his knock to perfection, mixing caution with aggression to smash two sixes and nine fours in a pressure-cooker atmosphere at the packed Punjab Cricket Association ground. Dhoni, who effected three dismissals, hit the winning four with five balls to spare to trigger wild celebrations in the stands. Shane Watson's international career ended in disappointment although the retiring all-rounder did well to grab two key wickets and a spectacular running catch. India suffered early setbacks in their chase, with openers Shikhar Dhawan (13) and Rohit Sharma (12) cooling their heels in the dressing room with 37 runs on the board. Watson proved his worth with the ball, accounting for Dhawan and Suresh Raina in consecutive overs. Yuvraj Singh, who had to get his ankle strapped after pulling a muscle, made a valiant 21. Earlier, opener Aaron Finch shared 54 runs for the opening wicket

with Usman Khawaja to give Australia a flying start after Steven Smith won the toss and elected to bat. Khawaja, enjoying a purple patch with the bat, smashed rookie fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah for four boundaries in the second over of the innings. Finch matched his opening partner in aggression, carting off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin for two sixes on the trot as the Aussies raced to 50 runs inside just four overs. The early onslaught stunned the Indian crowd, which only came to life when Ashish Nehra got rid of the dangerous Khawaja for 26 off 16 balls. Ashwin gave India the second breakthrough by having David Warner stumped, and in the process he became the first Indian and 12th player in the world to grab 50 wickets in T20 internationals. Part-time bowler Yuvraj got rid of Smith for two, before Hardik Pandya dismissed Finch to reduce Australia to 100-4. Bumrah clipped the stumps of Glenn Maxwell who made 31 off 28 balls, capping a fine turnaround for the bowler after he was whacked for 17 runs in his first over. Watson remained not out on 18 while Peter Nevill took 10 runs from the final two balls. Nehra was the standout bowler for India, giving away 20 runs while picking the key wicket of Khawaja. **SCORES IN BRIEF** AUSTRALIA: 160 for 6 in 20 overs (Khawaja 26, Finch 43, Maxwell 31; Pandya 2-36, Nehra 1-20) INDIA: 161 for 4 in 19.1 overs (Kohli 82 not out, Yuvraj 21, Dhoni 19 not out; Watson 2-23) **Result:** India won by 6 wickets. **Player-of-the-match:** Virat Kohli.



A Pakistani woman brings an injured child to a hospital in Lahore yesterday after a suicide blast ripped through the parking lot of a crowded park where Christians were celebrating Easter, killing at least 65 people. PHOTO: AFP

Blast at Lahore park kills 65

FROM PAGE 1
about 300 wounded. Police Superintendent Mustansar Feroz said most of the casualties were women and children. The Taliban faction Jamaat-ul-Ahrar claimed responsibility for the attack. "The target was Christians," a spokesman for the faction, Ehsanullah Ehsan, said. "We want to send this message to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that we have entered Lahore." "He can do what he wants but he won't be able to stop us. Our suicide bombers will continue these attacks." Islamists militants in Pakistan have attacked Christians and other religious minorities often over the past decade. Many Christians accuse the government of doing little to protect them, saying politicians are quick to offer condolences after an attack but slow to take any concrete steps to improve security. Pakistani Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif strongly condemned the blast, expressing grief for the victims. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has worked to thaw the icy

relations between the two neighbors, called Sharif to express his grief over the bombing. The Indian leader expressed solidarity with Pakistan, the Pakistani state-run news agency reported. The United States, a strategic ally of Pakistan, also condemned the attack. Salman Rafique, a health adviser for the Punjab provincial government, said many of the wounded were undergoing emergency surgery in hospitals. "We fear that the death toll may climb considerably," he said. TV footage showed children and women standing in pools of blood outside the park, crying and screaming as rescue workers, officials, police and bystanders carrying injured people to ambulances and private cars. Dozens of women and children were wheeled into hospitals, covered in blood. Many of the injured were transported to hospitals on taxis and auto-rickshaws due to a shortage of ambulances. Hundreds of citizens arrived outside hospitals to donate blood. Local television channels reported that many of the dead bodies were being kept in hospital wards as morgues were overcrowded. "We were just here to have a nice evening and enjoy the weather," Nasreen Bibi said at the Services Hospital, crying as she waited for doctors to update her on the condition of her two-year-old injured daughter. "May God shower his wrath upon these attackers. What kind of people target little children in a park?" On social media Pakistanis were retweeting the call for blood donations, while Facebook activated its "Safety Check" for Lahore. Pakistan, a nuclear-armed nation of 190 million people, is plagued by a Taliban insurgency, criminal gangs and sectarian violence. Punjab is its biggest and wealthiest province but has traditionally been more peaceful than other parts of Pakistan. Sharif's opponents have accused him of tolerating militancy in return for peace in his province, a charge he strongly denies. Last year, a bomb killed a popular Pakistani provincial minister and at least eight others when it destroyed the minister's home in Punjab.

BANGLADESHI WOMAN KSA executes Pakistani for murder

AFP, Riyadh
Saudi authorities yesterday executed a Pakistani convicted of killing a Bangladeshi woman, raising to 79 the number of death sentences they have carried out this year. Elias Ismail was found guilty of fatally stabbing Hajar Hussein during a robbery and was executed in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, an interior ministry statement carried by the official SPA news agency said. Most people put to death in Saudi Arabia are beheaded with a sword. The executions so far this year include 47 for "terrorism" carried out in a single day on January 2. In 2015, Saudi Arabia executed 153 people, most of them for drug trafficking or murder, according to an AFP count. Human rights group Amnesty International says the number of executions in Saudi Arabia last year was the highest for two decades. The kingdom is one of the world's top executioners, although its tally in 2015 was far behind those of China and Iran. Saudi Arabia has a strict Islamic legal code under which murder, drug trafficking, armed robbery, rape and apostasy are all punishable by death.

Hundreds flee after Philippine mountain fire

AFP, Manila
A raging fire on the Philippines highest mountain forced hundreds of people to flee from the peak by foot, officials said Sunday. Firefighters dug ditches that were seven-feet (two metres) deep in their battle to contain the blaze, which began Saturday afternoon and was ongoing 24 hours later, to stop it from spreading on the tourist hotspot of Mount Apo. There were no reported injuries and nearly all of the 1,000 tourists who were on the mountain were evacuated by noon Sunday, provincial disaster official Harry Camoro told AFP.

We now have a base

FROM PAGE 1
matches against Australia and India. This was a group in which every team had the ability to reach the semifinals and we had expected to win at least two matches. We were close but we couldn't finish," Mashrafe told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport upon the team's return home yesterday morning. "But we also have to see the positive aspect, which is something I don't think anyone wants to see right now. I think we have managed to create a base for our T20 cricket. The players now have a strong mindset. They believe that no matter who they play against, they can beat their opposition as long as they don't commit small mistakes. We believe that we can beat any side now and that's something we didn't have in T20s before," he added. Apart from playing in a tough group, Mashrafe and Co faced problems with their team selection as well. Both Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny were suspended for their bowling actions. To make matters worse, Tamim Iqbal could not play the game against Australia due to sickness. These were moments that Mashrafe described as extremely crucial during the World Cup. "When all three of them didn't play for us against Australia, it became a bit difficult because they were all in form. But the good thing

is that we came back in the game against India," explained Mashrafe. "If you talk particularly about Sunny, then I will say that we accepted his report because his level was different, but regarding Taskin it was shocking for us," said Mashrafe while elaborating on the Taskin saga; something that had actually seen him break down at one point. "The team management, several players from outside, none of them thought that he had a problem. So eventually when his action was found illegal we contacted the BCB [Bangladesh Cricket Board] and tried to find out if there was anything they could do. "In his last eight matches he had the world's best economy rate and to lose a player like him would have obviously been difficult. We had made several plans surrounding him, and that's why it got more difficult," he added. Towards the end, Mashrafe urged Bangladesh's fans not to give up on the Tigers. "They have always been with us even during hard times. I understand that they are disappointed and so are we. But I will hope that they will, despite feeling bad, continue supporting us so that we can win tougher contests ahead. I believe that these players that we have can give us much better times than we are going through right now," said Mashrafe.