

School building too risky for students

Lack of renovation pushes Patuakhali primary school towards ruination

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali
Risking their lives, over 200 students are attending classes at Dakkhin Kazir Howla Govt Primary School in Rangabali upazila, as the school building is in a bad state and it may collapse anytime.

Sources said some well-off locals set up a tin-roof building in 1969 to spread education among the children in the remote char area.

The government listed the school as a registered primary school in 1979. Finally, it was nationalised in 2013.

The Local Government Engineering Department built a one-storey building in 1980 and since then it was not renovated.

Lutfur Rahman, acting headmaster of the school, said plasters at many places of the building fell off and water entered the building during the rainy season.

They are facing many problems, including classroom shortage, as the lone building has become unfit for use, he said.

There are 203 students in the school, including 112 female students, he said.

Mohammad Mahin, a student of class-V, said they are always in fear as the condition of the building is very bad.

Mahin's classmate Maria Begum said the school needs a new building. Zakir Hossain, a guardian, said the government should take steps to build a new building, considering the interest of education in the remote area.

Mannan Howlader, another guardian, said they are afraid that the building might collapse anytime. They have called upon the authorities concerned to take immediate measures in this regard.

Golam Sagir, Rangabali upazila primary education officer, said they already contacted the higher authority for taking steps to construct a new concrete building in the school.

But, they got an allocation of Tk 3 lakh and with the money, they planned to set up a tin-roof building to meet the accommodation problem, he added.



The dilapidated Dakkhin Kazir Howla Govt Primary School in Rangabali upazila of Patuakhali. Parents fear the building might collapse anytime due to lack of maintenance. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

President to visit Bhutan next month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid is expected to pay a four-day visit to Bhutan next month.

Dhaka is expecting that the visit would provide opportunities for the entire gamut of bilateral relations.

The president will be visiting the tiny Himalayan nation at the invitation of its King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

Officials at the foreign ministry and Bhutanese embassy, however, said the date for the visit is yet to be finalised as the foreign ministries of the two countries are working on finalising the date and other programme schedules.

They said during the visit, the president will hold official talks with the Bhutanese king, while its PM Tshering Tobgay and important cabinet members will call on the president.

WRIT ON STATE RELIGION

Petition against 6 eminent personalities rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a petition seeking to bring charges of blasphemy against six eminent individuals who had challenged the declaration of Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdullah Al Masud passed the order hours after Mufti Masum Billah, 47, of South Dania in the capital's Kadamtoli, filed the petition with the court.

The eminent individuals are Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, retired Maj Gen CR Dutta, writer-columnist Badaruddin Umar, Prof Borhan Uddin Khan Jahangir, Prof Anisuzzaman and their lawyer Subrata Chowdhury.

In his petition, Masum, a devotee of "Sureshwar Darbar Sharif", said all the six had hurt religious sentiments by filing a writ petition that challenged the declaration of Islam as the state religion and so blasphemy charges should be pressed against them.

Fifteen distinguished citizens, including the six, under the banner of Sairachar O Samprodaikota Protirodh Committee (Dictatorship and Communalism Resistance Committee) filed the petition with the High Court in 1988, challenging the validity of Islam as the state religion.

Military dictator HM Ershad pushed the eighth amendment to the constitution through parliament that passed a bill on Jun 5, 1988. That paved the way for article 2A to be inserted in the constitution, making Islam the state religion.

The amendment, however, restored secularism as one of the four fundamental principles of the state, which had been omitted by a martial law regime after the bloody change-over in 1975.

While passing yesterday's order, the court said it dismissed the petition, finding no cogent grounds to bring blasphemy charges against the six people, court sources said.

Earlier on March 28 this year, the HC rejected the writ on the grounds that the petitioners had no jurisdiction to move such a petition since they were not aggrieved by the provision.

Kadar's plight not over yet

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that the law would take its own course.

The OC is using lawmakers, politicians, teachers and even my friends, he said, adding that most of them were saying that the OC got his punishment for the crime he committed in 2011 "so you should forgive him and withdraw the case".

Kadar is dealing with another problem. The hearing of the appeal Helal had filed against his punishment was not being held and hearing dates were being deferred again and again. This is allowing more pressure on him to be added.

An additional district session judge court is scheduled to hear Helal's appeal on June 16.

Asked Mohammad Gaffar Hossain, counsel of Kadar said his client is in constant pressure from different people. "From morning to dusk, from work to home, Kadar has been facing pressure to compromise with Helal Uddin," he added.

Kadar's lawyer said the hearing on

the appeal had been deferred at least 11 times in the last one year due to defence team's time petitions.

Saidur Rahman Manik, one of the counsels of Helal, said it was true that the hearing of the appeal was deferred many times but the defence and the prosecution were to blame for this.

Manik, also president of Dhaka Ainjibi Samity, said he was not aware that pressure was being mounted on Kadar to withdraw the case.

Following a three-year legal battle, Kadar finally won the case in May last year when a Dhaka court punished Helal, setting a rare example of punishing a police official for custodial torture in a country where allegations of such torture and deaths are rampant.

Before delivering the judgment, the court cancelled Helal's bail, declared him a fugitive, and issued a warrant against him.

Helal then surrendered before a higher court and obtained bail from it.

In the early hours of July 16, 2011,

some plainclothes policemen from Khilgaon Police Station stopped Kadar at Segunbagicha while he was returning to his dormitory, Fazlul Huq Hall, from a relative's house in the capital's Eskaton area.

They beat up Kadar, then a DU student of biochemistry and molecular biology, with sticks terming him a criminal, according to the statement of the case filed by Kadar in January 2012.

Two cases were filed against Kadar. He was shown arrested in another false case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station for carjacking.

Taking into cognisance a report of The Daily Star, the High Court directed the government and the police authorities to launch special probes into the matter.

On January 23, 2012, Kadar filed a case with Khilgaon Police Station against Helal for torturing him in custody and implicating him falsely in three criminal cases.

The Daily Star could not reach Helal for comments.

AL's role

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1971 Liberation War when minorities were the worst victim, they said.

They vented their disappointment and anger at a meeting of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad and 14-party alliance at the AL chief's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

The meeting was convened to make the 14-party's scheduled nationwide human chain programme on June 19 a success. The programme was to protest the recent killings and militant attacks.

"A total 23 people were killed by suspected militants this year and of them 18 were from minority communities. Minority people are 10 percent of the total population. But around 70 percent of victims were from minority communities," said Hindu-Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad General Secretary Rana Dasgupta at the meeting.

He said the recent attacks on the minorities remind them of the repression in 1971.

Rana said, "The ruling party high-ups are only giving us consolation after

being attacked. They are only providing us lip-service."

He observed that it was possible to wage a mass movement against the secret killers if all political parties were on their side.

Reacting to Rana's speech, 14-party spokesperson Mohammed Nasim said, "Why didn't you speak against the killers -- BNP-Jamaat? Why you need all parties? Here is the problem of the Oikya Parishad."

Nasim, also the health minister, urged people to remain united in resisting militancy and secret killers. "Help us like you did in the past. We will defeat the evil force taking the people of the country on our side," he added.

At the meeting, Rana said the Hindu-Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad would join the human chain.

"We will participate in the human chain with our pain and fury." At least eight people became victims of such killings since May 1. They include a Christian grocer, a Hindu priest and the wife of a police superintendent.

MAJOR MASS SHOOTINGS IN US

Blacksburg, Virginia, April 16, 2007: A 23-year-old student of Korean origin goes on a rampage at Virginia Tech University, killing 32 people before committing suicide.

Newtown, Connecticut, December 14, 2012: A young man kills 26 people, including 20 children at Sandy Hook elementary school. He also fatally shoots

Killeen, Texas, October 16, 1991: A man shoots dead 22 people in a restaurant and then kills himself. Another wounded

Littleton, Colorado, April 20, 1999: Two teenage boys shoot and kill 12 classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School before killing themselves.

Aurora, Colorado, July 20, 2012: A man kills 12 people and injures 70 more when he opens fire at a movie theater showing a late-night premiere of a Batman film in a suburb of Denver. The gunman James Holmes is given a life jail

Fort Hood, Texas, November 5, 2009: US army psychiatrist Major Nidal Hasan opens fire at his military base, killing 13 people and wounding 42, before being overpowered by police. The shooting was the worst such incident on a military base

Gunman kills 50 in US nightclub

FROM PAGE 1
People inside the cavernous nightclub described a scene of panic made more confusing by the loud music and darkness.

Christopher Hansen said he was getting a drink at the bar about 2:00am when he "just saw bodies going down." He heard gunshots, "just one after another after another."

The gunshots went on for so long that the shooting "could have lasted a whole song," he said.

Ricardo Negrón Almodovar escaped the club and posted this description on his Facebook page: "People on the dance floor and bar got down on the floor and some of us who were near the bar and back exit managed to go out through the outdoor area and just ran."

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said he had declared a state of emergency for the city. Florida Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency for Orange County, where the attack occurred.

HELMET SAVES OFFICER
Law enforcement sources had told CNN that the suspect had possible explosive devices strapped to his body and in his vehicle, but a U.S. official said later that no explosives were found.

Mina said authorities were called to the club. After a shootout with the gunman around 2:00am ET, the shooter ran back inside the club and took people hostage.

People inside the club were communicating on their phones with law enforcement between that time and around 5:00am, when authorities used

an armored vehicle to break down the door of the building. The club is a vast, open space that was hosting more than 300 patrons.

One officer suffered an eye injury when a bullet struck his Kevlar helmet, said Danny Banks, special agent in charge of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Orlando bureau. The helmet saved the officer's life, Banks said.

The shooter, Omar Saddiqui Mateen, is 29 and from Fort Pierce, about 120 miles southeast of Orlando, two law enforcement officials told CNN. He had been trained as a security guard, CNN has learned.

Two officials tell CNN that the FBI had investigated Mateen at some point for possibly having ties to or sympathizing with Islamic extremism. A law enforcement official said there were two cases opened involving Mateen but the probes didn't result in enough evidence to charge him with anything.

In the past two weeks Mateen legally purchased a Glock pistol, found at the shooting scene, from a St. Lucie County area gun store, a law enforcement official said.

Investigators have talked to Mateen's family, who indicated he had expressed anti-gay feelings.

Orlando authorities said they consider the violence an act of domestic terrorism. The FBI is involved. While investigators are exploring all angles, they "have suggestions the individual has leanings towards (Islamic terrorism), but right now we can't say definitely,"

said Ron Hopper, assistant special agent in charge of the FBI's Orlando bureau.

Authorities are also looking into the possibility the attack was a hate crime, a law enforcement source told CNN. **SHOOTING, HOSTAGE SITUATION** Video from CNN affiliate WKMG captured clubgoers carrying injured people from the club.

When the shots erupted, Hansen hit the ground, crawling on his elbows and knees, before he spotted a man who had been shot.

"I took my bandana off and shoved it in the hole in his back," Hansen said, adding that he saw another woman who appeared to be shot in the arm.

Luis Burbano was with his best friend inside the club when they realized the pop, pop, pop they were hearing wasn't the music but gunfire.

It was getting, "closer and louder and louder," he told CNN's Jake Tapper. He and his friend noticed a 10-second break in the shooting, so they managed to make a break for the door.

"We tried to save ourselves and as many people as we could to make it out of there," he said.

Once outside he saw a young man collapse in front of him. "I grabbed him not realizing that his forearm was split in two," Burbano said.

He acted fast by ripping off his shirt and tightening it around the man's arm to try to slow the bleeding.

Burbano spoke with CNN hours after talking with police and getting home. He was still very shaken.



He was not a stable person

Says ex-wife of suspected Orlando shooter

THE WASHINGTON POST ONLINE

The ex-wife of the 29-year-old suspected of killing about 50 people in an Orlando nightclub early yesterday said he was violent and mentally unstable and beat her repeatedly while they were married.

The ex-wife said she met Omar Mateen online about eight years ago and decided to move to Florida and marry him.

"He was not a stable person," said the ex-wife, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "He would just come home and start beating me up because the laundry wasn't finished or something like that."

Mateen's ex-wife said his family was from Afghanistan. His family later moved to Florida.

The two married in March 2009 and moved into a 2-bedroom condominium in Fort Pierce, Fla, that Mateen's family owned.

"He seemed like a normal human being," she said, adding that he wasn't very religious and worked out at the gym often. She said in the few months they were married he gave no signs of having fallen under the sway of radical Islam. She said he owned a small-caliber handgun and worked as a guard at a nearby facility for juvenile delinquents.

"He was a very private person," she said. Her parents intervened when they learned Mateen had assaulted her. "They literally saved my life."

According to court records, the two divorced in 2011. After learning about what happened in Orlando, she said: "I am still processing. I am definitely lucky."

Suspect's father supported Afghan Taliban

THE WASHINGTON POST ONLINE

The father of Omar Mateen, identified by police as the man behind the carnage at an Orlando nightclub early yesterday morning, is an Afghan man who holds strong political views, including support for the Afghan Taliban.

Seddique Mateen, who has been referred to as Mir Seddique in early news reports, hosted the "Durand Jirga Show" on a channel called Payam-e-Afghan which broadcasts from California.

In it, the elder Mateen speaks in the Dari language on a variety of political subjects. Dozens of videos are posted on a channel under Seddique Mateen's name on YouTube.

A phone number and post office box that are displayed on the show were traced back to the Mateen home in Florida. Mateen also owns a non-profit organisation under the name Durand Jirga, which is registered in Port St Lucie, Fla.

In one video, Mateen expresses gratitude toward the Afghan Taliban, while denouncing the Pakistani government.

"Our brothers in Waziristan, our warrior brothers in [the] Taliban movement and national Afghan Taliban are rising up," he said. "Inshallah the Durand Line issue will be solved soon."

The "Durand Line issue" is a historically significant one, particularly for members of the Pashtun ethnic group, whose homeland straddles the border

between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Durand Line is that border. It is not clear whether the Mateens are Pashtun. The Afghan Taliban is mostly made up of Pashtuns.

The line was drawn as a demarcation of British and Afghan spheres of influence in 1893. The British controlled most of subcontinental Asia at the time, though some parts, including what is now Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan, were only loosely held. The line was inherited as a border by Pakistan after its independence. Since it splits the Pashtun population politically, it is seen as a cause for their marginalization. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group in most of eastern

Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.

Pashtuns are also sometimes referred to as Pakhtuns, or Pathans.

Yesterday morning, Mateen told NBC News that his son's rampage "has nothing to do with religion." Instead, he offered another possible motive. He said his son got angry when he saw two men kissing in Miami a few months ago. He said his son was especially enraged because the kissing took place in front of his own young son.

"We are saying we are apologizing for the whole incident. We weren't aware of any action he is taking. We are in shock like the whole country."

Mateen could not be reached for comment.