

Role of admin in question

FROM PAGE 1

Armed with sticks and sharp weapons, the zealots, mostly from Touhidi Janata, went on the rampage in Duttatabari, Goura Mandir, Jagannath Mandir and Kashipara Mandir. Idols at the temples were either destroyed or damaged, they said.

Police personnel sat idle during the attacks, alleged Nasiragar Upazila Vice Chairman Anjan Kumar Dev and Upazila Puja Uddjapan Committee President Kajal Jyoti Dutta -- both victims of the attacks.

Anjan said the administration and police should take responsibility for the attacks on the Hindus.

"On the previous night, they [attackers] asked all to join the protests, and announced plans to hold protest rallies... How could the administration allow them to hold such rallies," he asked.

Kajal said both the administration and police were "unusually late" in their response to the attacks.

Abdur Rahim, headmaster of Ashutosh Pilot High School in the upazila, said, "Things could have been different if the administration had taken necessary measures to bring the situation under control."

From the protest rally at the school's playground, members of Touhidi Janata urged locals over loudspeakers to attend their programme. They even asked shop owners to shut their outlets and join it, according to locals and victims.

In the name of protesting the Facebook post, Touhidi Janata men tried to instigate people by giving speeches over loudspeakers from different mosques for hours since Saturday morning, they said.

But the upazila administration or Nasiragar Police Station didn't do anything to keep the zealots in check. Instead, they let them go ahead with their plots to wreak mayhem, they alleged.

Mukdesur Rahman, chairman of Touhidi Janata's Nasiragar unit, said they had organised the protest rally at the school playground but he denied the allegations that they were involved in the attacks.

"We condemn the attack and demand punishment of the culprits," the leader of the Qawmi madrasa-based Islamit organisation told this correspondent at his Jamia Siddiqia Ramziah Madrassa office in Nasiragar last night.

Mukdesur, also imam of Nasiragar Upazila Complex mosque, said he had no idea about the attackers wearing panjabi and prayer caps as described by the witnesses.

On Sunday noon, around 200 reli-

gious bigots attacked at least five temples, and vandalised and looted about 100 Hindu houses in several localities in Nasiragar over a Facebook post purportedly from the account of Rasraj Das, 27.

The attackers also beat up more than 100 people.

Earlier on Saturday noon, locals handed over Rasraj to police.

Asked, Nasiragar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Choudhury Muazzam Ahmed said some bigots from the rally under the banner of Touhidi Janata launched an attack on the Hindus in the area.

He said the administration had given permission to hold rallies upon promises from both the Islamist groups that those would be peaceful.

Under police protection, the UNO himself attended Touhidi Janata's rally that began at 10:00am on Sunday. Upazila Parishad Chairman APM Moniruzzaman Sarkar and Officer-in-Charge of Nasiragar Police Station Abdul Quader were also present there.

"I don't see any negligence on the part of the administration," said the UNO.

Contacted, Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police in Brahmanbaria, said there was a shortage of manpower at different police stations, including the one in Nasiragar, as a large number of police personnel were deployed in different unions for yesterday's Union Parishad polls.

The SP said the DC office had already formed a committee to investigate the incident and see if there was any negligence on the part of the upazila administration.

Police also formed another probe committee to find out whether any of the police personnel was insincere in carrying out duties.

"We will take action if anyone is found guilty of negligence," he said.

Ranjan Kumar Das, Brahmanbaria senior additional superintendent of police, said two of the victims -- Kajal and Goura Mandir Committee General Secretary Nirmal Chowdhury -- filed two cases with Nasiragar Police Station against over 1,000 unnamed people on Sunday.

Despite repeated attempts, Abdul Quader, officer-in-charge of Nasiragar Police Station, could not be reached over his mobile phone.

Police have so far arrested 15 people in connection with the attacks. They, however, didn't disclose their identities.

Additional police personnel and members of Border Guard Bangladesh have been deployed in the areas.

Meanwhile, local Awami League last night demanded resignation of the

UNO and the OC of Nasiragar Police Station for their "failure" to prevent the violence.

Asked, Senior Home Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan said, "A vested quarter always wants to destabilise the government. And it is the government's duty to resist such attempts."

He said "a new group" emerged and its aim is to create troubles for political gains. They wouldn't be spared. The government would not compromise with them.

"We will resist incidents like that of Brahmanbaria. If it can be done peacefully, we will do it peacefully. But if not, we will do it by force," he added.

Yesterday, this correspondent visited the affected areas, including Kashipara, Daspara, Ghoshpara, Duttapara and Nomoshudrapara, and talked to more than 50 victims of the Hindu community and 40 locals in Nasiragar Union.

The attackers ran amok in the areas for about three hours since Sunday noon, but police didn't turn up in any of the places on time. The law enforcers finally brought the situation under control after 2:00pm, according to victims and locals.

The attackers beat up over 100 people, including women and children, of the minority community.

Armed with locally made weapons, iron rods and sticks, several groups of religious bigots from Nurpur, Bhuvan and Rostulpur areas joined members of Touhidi Janata, and carried out the attacks in the Hindu localities, said witnesses.

Chanting slogans against the Hindus, the attackers vandalised houses, and looted valuables, including mobile phones, gold ornaments and televisions. They even snatched earrings and jewellery from a number of Hindu women.

They didn't even spare children. During the attack on a house at Mistripura, two of the bigots hit a two-and-a-half-year-old child as he was crying during the looting.

"After the youths looted Tk 60,000 and five tolas of gold from the locker, I begged them not to take money from my elder daughter's purse, as she would need it to go to her college for the BA examinations tomorrow.

"But they took away all the money -- Tk 2,000 -- from my daughter's purse," said Protima Das of Daspara, who was in tears.

A Hindu woman at Nomoshudrapara said, "We hid our 14-year-old daughter under the bed to save her from the attackers."

The attackers set fire to a cattle shed

there. In Kashipara, musical instruments, including harmonium, were seen floating in a pond. The attackers also vandalised a Kali Temple in the area.

The religious zealots also set alight fishing nets of Hindu fishermen, ignoring their pleas that their livelihood depended on those, said Anurup Das of Mistripura.

UP member

FROM PAGE 2

Infuriated at this, the chairman started beating Champa with a wooden stick.

Seeing her daughter assaulted, Sonavan stepped forward to save her, but got herself beaten by the chairman and his supporters, including UP member Shahidul.

OC Jalal Uddin of Badalgachhi Police Station said they would take necessary action upon receiving a complaint in this regard.

Our correspondents in Tangail and Natore contributed to this report.

CJ assigns

FROM PAGE 4

Three other death-row convicts are Zakir Hossain alias Pavel, Saddique Ahmed alias Boro Moyna and Taz Uddin alias Badal.

The same day, Khulna Metropolitan Magistrate Court handed down death penalty to Omar Sharif -- owner of "Sharif Motors" -- and his uncle Mintu Khan for killing Rakib by pumping air into his body through rectum in a shop in Tutpara Kabarkhana of Khulna on August 3 last year when the boy went to a nearby store to buy some paint.

On February 15, 2013, Rajib, who used to write online against war criminals and was an activist of the Shahbagh movement, was hacked to death near his Mirpur house in the capital.

A Dhaka court on December 31 last year handed down death penalty to two people and different jail terms to six others, including the chief of banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team, for killing Rajib.

On August 16, 2013, the bodies of Mahfuzur Rahman, inspector of Special Branch of Police, and his wife Swapna Rahman were recovered from their Chamelibagh house in the capital.

A Dhaka court on November 12 last year found their daughter Oishee guilty of killing her parents and sentenced her to death.

'Let the salute

FROM PAGE 1

Shakib might not have been too keen to continue speaking on his celebratory move, but the country's social media just could not have enough of it. Pictures of random people saluting the oblivion started flooding the timelines and it even led to some of the more popular figures, including the US ambassador to Bangladesh, to join in.

It is amazing and partly funny at the same time how Shakib almost always somehow manages to become the centre of discussion after a series. But of course, it is not as though the left-hander turned out to be one of the main talking points just because of the salute. He has managed to put up yet another emphatic performance in yet another series for Bangladesh.

The ease with which he always manages to put in match-winning performances was perhaps the reason why his answer to the question on whether the win against England was Bangladesh's biggest ever, was a lot calmer when compared to his peers.

"This definitely is the biggest win ever. Considering the circumstances and the situation we were in, this is the biggest. I don't think we have won a more crucial Test before," he says during an exclusive interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

One of the major reasons behind Bangladesh's win was the change in approach of the team. They played on turning tracks as opposed to flat decks that were so frequently used in the past in order to achieve draws. Shakib elaborates on the decision to take that step.

"There are a number of reasons. Firstly, we had better spinners than them. And then, whenever we made flat wickets we played for a draw. But we ended up losing those games. So we told ourselves that since we lose on those pitches anyway, there is no harm in trying something different.

"Because at the end of the day, if you can't take 20 wickets, then there's no chance for us to win. And that's why we tried to help the spinners and by the grace of God, it worked," he explained.

But will the pitches that were laid down during the England series be a blueprint for future visitors? Shakib did not think so.

"It depends on who we play against. According to me, England and New Zealand have lesser experienced spinners than us. But other countries have quality bowlers. In this case, apart from Moeen Ali, there wasn't really any other threatening spinner.

"So, before working on a pitch, we have to judge all aspects. It depends

upon the combination of our batsmen and their team as well," he said.

Ask Shakib about the expectations about the Tests of the future and he will cut you short, "Bhai, now that the Test is over, I am thinking about the BPL." It is the way he thinks; one thing at a time.

But he elaborated when asked if defeating a top-ranked Test nation has helped Bangladesh overcome a mental block of sorts.

"We didn't have any mental block. If you keep playing you will automatically improve. The current circumstances gave us a good opportunity to beat England and we managed to do that. Against New Zealand, the circumstances will be different. Every Test poses a new challenge," he explained.

While he did put in match changing performances, he was also criticised for some of his actions in the series. On the third day of the first Test, when Bangladesh were looking to build a lead, Shakib shockingly charged at a Moeen delivery in only the second ball of the day. The ball turned and the left-hander was comfortably stumped.

It was an action that many claimed to be the turning point of that first Test. When asked if the approach he followed in that Test was a part of his aggression or whether that was a mistake, the left-hander took his time before coming up with a reply.

"I don't know. Human beings make mistakes. If they don't make mistakes then how can they get out?" he said after a few seconds.

It was a mistake but one that the left-hander, like so many times before in his career, managed to rectify at the exactly the right moment.

BASIC Bank

FROM PAGE 16

Corruption Commission filed 56 cases over irregularities in disbursements of loans of around Tk 4, 500 crore from several branches of the bank. Monayem Khan is accused in 35 of the cases.

Fourteen Basic Bank officials, including four deputy managing directors and three general managers, have been dismissed over the scam.

One of the best-run banks until 2009, BASIC Bank was entangled in financial irregularities following Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu's appointment as its chairman that year.

In 2012 and the next year, Bangladesh Bank in inspections detected the embezzlement of Tk 4,500 crore from the bank.

Clinton

FROM PAGE 16

it had been narrowing even before the email controversy resurfaced.

The unexpected turn in the email controversy shook financial markets' conviction of a Clinton victory in the election and the US dollar slipped against major currencies in early Asian trading yesterday.

US Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid sent a letter to Comey on Sunday suggesting he violated the Hatch Act, which bars the use of a federal government position to influence an election.

"Through your partisan actions, you may have broken the law," Reid, a senator from Nevada, said in the letter to Comey.

Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and campaign manager Robby Mook questioned Comey's decision to send a letter notifying Congress of the email review before he even knew whether they were significant or relevant.

Comey's letter was "long on innuendo, short on facts," Podesta said on CNN's "State of the Union" program, and accused the FBI chief of breaking precedent by disclosing aspects of an investigation so close to the election.

"We are calling on Mr. Comey to come forward and explain what's at issue here," Podesta said, adding the significance of the emails was unclear.

"He might have taken the first step of actually having looked at them before he did this in the middle of a presidential campaign, so close to the voting," Podesta said.

Comey's letter was sent over the objections of Justice Department officials. But those officials did not try to stop the FBI from getting the warrant, a source familiar with the decision said, because they are interested in the FBI moving quickly on the probe.

Sources close to the investigation have said the latest emails were discovered as part of a separate probe of former Democratic US Representative Anthony Weiner, the estranged husband of Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

Weiner is the target of an FBI investigation into illicit text messages he is alleged to have sent to a 15-year-old girl in North Carolina. The FBI already had a warrant to search Weiner's laptop in that probe, but needed a warrant to look at the material that might be related to Clinton.

"CHECK ON CORRUPTION" Sources familiar with the matter said FBI agents working on the Weiner investigation saw material on a laptop belonging to Weiner that led them to believe it might be relevant to the investigation of Clinton's email practices.

End 'dual rule' in judiciary

FROM PAGE 1

curtailing the SC's powers. Currently, the powers over controlling and disciplining subordinate courts are vested in the president, who will exercise those in consultation with the SC.

The provision gives the government scope to have control over the judiciary as the president, according to article 48 (3) of the constitution, shall act on advice of the prime minister.

The present system has been viewed by many legal experts as "dual rule" in the judiciary.

"The Supreme Court alone cannot take steps regarding lower courts' judges' promotion and transfer or any disciplinary actions against them due to the [present] article 116. Judges cannot be appointed to fill many vacant posts at district courts on time due to the dual rule," said the chief justice.

"For these reasons, the judicial works are being hampered, and the sufferings of the litigants are on the rise," said the CJ, in a message he gave yesterday on the ninth anniversary of the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The lower judiciary was separated from the executive on

November 1, 2007, following the Supreme Court directives in Masdar Hossain case, which is popularly known as the separation of judiciary case.

"Considering these problems, it is the demand of time that the original article 116 of the constitution is reinstated," asserted the chief justice.

If the article is restored, he said, the independence of the judiciary will be upheld and consolidated further, and new dimensions will be added to the overall progress of the judiciary.

He also cited article 109 that still says the High Court Division of the SC shall have superintendence and control over all courts and tribunals subordinate to it.

The chief justice in his message also lauded judicial magistrates' role in dispensing justice.

"Despite different hurdles, the judicial magistrates are discharging their duties properly and therefore, the rate of disposal of cases is increasing day by day," he added.

HOW SC LOST THE POWERS

The SC used to have control over the appointments, postings, promotions and grant of leave, and disciplining of persons employed in the

judicial service until the fourth amendment to the constitution in 1975. The amendment empowered the president to do the jobs, in effect allowing the executive branch to control the lower judiciary.

In 1978, the martial law regime led by General Ziaur Rahman amended article 116 through a martial law regulation, making the provision that the SC would be consulted by the president to exercise the power to control and discipline the lower courts.

The changes were ratified by the fifth amendment passed in 1979. The changes ceased to have effect with the nullification of the fifth amendment by the SC.

Through the 15th amendment in 2011 without restoring the original article 116, the AL-led government revived the amendments introduced by Gen Zia.

To bring back those powers to the SC, the original article 116 of the 1972 constitution needs to be amended. The changes, according to legal experts, are also required to ensure independence of the judiciary.

The apex court in several judgments has also spoken for reinstating the original article 116 for an effective separation of the judiciary.

MP, 7 others charged

FROM PAGE 16

Of the eight, Sattar, Fakruzzaman and Rabbani are on the run, while the rest including Hannan are behind bars.

The tribunal's investigation agency on July 11 said to have found evidence against the eight and handed over the probe report, statements of the witnesses and other documents to the chief prosecutor's office.

The prosecution submitted the formal charges and other documents to the tribunal on Sunday through its registrar's office. Prosecutor Rezia Sultana Chaman mentioned it before the tribunal yesterday.

Most of the accused were either involved with Muslim League or Islami Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami during the War, according to the agency. Both Muslim League and Jamaat fought against the country's independence.

Currently, they are involved in the politics of Jatiya Party and Jamaat, it added.

The accused had links with three torture camps set up at Mymensingh District Rest House, East Pakistan Agricultural University campus, now Bangladesh Agricultural University, and Hannan's house on Rambabu Road under Kotwali Police Station in the district, according to the agency.

The charges are abduction, torture and killing of sculptor Abdur Rashid of Purohitpara in Sadar upazila in between April 23 and 24; killing of Jatish Chandra Chakrabarty Sentu of Bolar Hindupara in Trishal on August 2, injuring two others and torching his houses; abduction, torture and killing of Abdur Rahman of Boiral Munshipara in between August 7 and 9; looting and torching the house of Abdur Rahman; abduction, torture and killing of Khandakar Abdul Ali Ratan of Jail Road under Sadar upazila in between November 17 and December 7; and abduction and torture of Abed Hossain Khan of Natun Bazar under Sadar upazila and KM Khalid Babu, former

Awami League lawmaker from the district in 1971.

SHERPUR CASE

The tribunal has meanwhile directed the prosecution to submit an investigation report, if they have any, on January 23 in a case filed against SM Aminuzzaman Faruk, an alleged Razakar from Sherpur, who allegedly committed war crimes in 1971.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice Anwarul Haque fixed the date following a three-month time petition moved by prosecutor Rezia Sultana Chaman. Before that she submitted a progress report on investigation against Faruk.

Faruk, 58, of Eshibpur village in Nokla upazila of the district, was arrested on August 23 following an arrest warrant issued by the tribunal. He is now behind bars.

Investigation in the case began on November 19 last year and the investigation officer has already found "his involvement" in at least two incidents of murder committed in 1971, according to the prosecution.

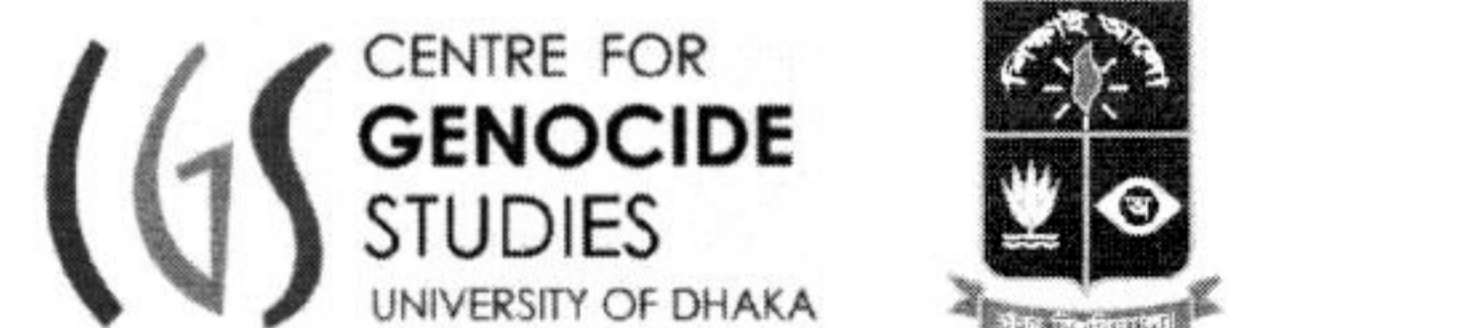
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