



Quandary Reflection

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Urgent Action appealed:
Minorities Fear for Life and Security:
Protect Minority Professors of Chittagong
University and HR Activist Rabindra Ghosh.
Ensure Human Rights and Freedom of
Expression.
Stop Forced Conversion to Islam and Restore
Communal Harmony.

Please visit

http://hrcbm.org/news/HRCBM_UA_091202.pdf
for a copy of the "urgent action".

Thursday, September 12, 2002
HRCBM/Bang/UA_9_12_02/proection_1001



হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসাধীন রানী -খুলনা অফিস

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গতকাল মহিলা আইনজীবী সমিতির সদস্যরা খুলনা জেনারেল হাসপাতালে ছবি রানীর বক্তব্য গ্রহণ করেন ২৫/০৬/০২

Picture (courtesy Janakantha): Seriously injured and sexually assaulted Ms. Chabi is visited by women lawyers group.

BARBARIC RAMPAGE

SURVIVORS CRIES OUT, NIGHTMARE STILL HUNTS THEM



Picture (courtesy Bhorer Kagoj): Tortured children of the Hill.

It is difficult to comprehend that there was an Ashram (Orphanage) here at Buakhali village, where at least 300 children were dwelled upon. The little hearts were greeted then by the waking sound of the Morning Prayer “Shankha” and the songs of the bird in the sun rise; they were given strict instructions to follow “Niywam (rules)” of Ashram with daily activities of physical exercise, studying, games and songs. But above all these it was beautiful and full of life. Now everything is dream. There remains no existence of it here anymore. Buakhali is about four hours journey from Khagrachari town. It is like another village of the hill, covered with green grass and the valleys that are sprinkled by mist of the waterfalls. Here exists post office, souk, school, college,

Temple and Mosque. But only thing is vanished is the beautiful Ashram (Orphanage) of the hill. After 1986 settlement plan by Bangladesh government has empowered settlers belonging to majority community of the country to forcefully occupied the 300 acres land of the Ashram. The settlement plan of Bangladesh government is very much arguable, which some claims was design to evict out tribals from their own homeland. Those tribal passersby yet get the jolt when passing through the land where the beautiful Ashram once existed. If asked to tribal inhabitants about who has forcefully confiscated the land of helpless children, they gaze bemused.



Picture (Courtsey Bhorer Kagoj): Destroyed Ashram and two tribal victims f the nightmare.

..... Mr Ranjit Tripura lives in the remote village of Gumangpara near the Buakhali. He has a small hut in the valley front yard covered with flowers. It was about nightfall. Once I imparted my intention to investigate the matter, he almost whispered to my ear. I was manager of the Ashram. Those days were full of happiness and joy. Then came the day of nightmare. Thousands of settlers (Bengali Muslims) alongwith Bangladesh Army attacked the villages of the area during the beginning of June. They burned down everything in their path. I was not at the Ashram. Latter went to see the aftermath during midday. The Ashram was burned to ashes. There remain no structures in the area. On the one hand the Ashram and the other is my family. When cam back to my house, it was full of villagers who told me that their houses were looted and burned. They have lost everything, they just survived somehow. At 14th June, I along with all my family members we joined the journey of other helpless refugees. It was rainy day. My wife had a bag and we had some cloths in it. We met with lot of people on the way. Wanted to cross the border and take refuge to Indian side, BSF (Indian Border Security Force) beat us badly and not allowed to cross the border. We were numbered about four to five thousand people. I wanted to talk to Indian BSF on behalf of the refugees. They beat me up for that guilt. Then like a uprooted grass we become vagabond and at last sheltered in Takumabari. There we stayed for 12 years. It is a long story, lots of incidents. Not all of them can be told and perhaps not wise to tell also.....

'EVERY DAY IT GETS WORSE AND WORSE IN BANGLADESH'

The Gazette

<http://www.canada.com/components/printstory/printstory.asp?id={BEA2E8D2-28C6-4C74-AC09-0259DFFD5D48}>

Monday, September 16, 2002



GAZETTE

Antara Dhar, 5, takes part in yesterday's demonstration downtown to protest against bias and repression against minorities in Bangladesh.

A few hundred people marched through downtown Montreal yesterday to protest against what they describe as the repressive, even brutal discrimination against minorities in Bangladesh.

Most of the demonstrators were Hindus, but Christians and Buddhists also took part.

No Muslims were involved in the protest; Islam is the state religion of Bangladesh.

"Every day it gets worse and worse in Bangladesh," said Dipak Dhar, one of the organizers. "There are many killings and gang rapes."

About 10 per cent of the country's population is Hindu. Traditionally they support the secular Awami League, which lost a nationwide election in October to a party said to be allied to radical Islamic forces. Since then, thousands of Hindus have fled over the border to India.

In December, Amnesty International declared, "The Bangladeshi government must take urgent action to protect the country's Hindu minority, following weeks of grave human-rights abuse."

Organizers of yesterday's protest say the abuse has not stopped, however.

"We've tried talking to the Bangladeshi government," said Sanjib Dash, general secretary of the Canadian branch of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council. "But they say nothing is going on."

BANGLADESH: BREEDING GROUND FOR MUSLIM TERROR

Aisa Times

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DI21Df06.html

Among the more than 60 videotapes that the American cable television network CNN obtained from al-Qaeda's archives in Afghanistan in August this year, one marked "Burma" (Myanmar) purports to show Muslim "allies" training in that country. While the group shown, the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), was founded by Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar's Rakhine State and claims to be fighting for autonomy or independence for its people, the tape was, in fact, shot in Bangladesh.

The RSO, and other Rohingya factions, have never had any camps inside Myanmar, only across the border in Bangladesh. The camp in the video is located near the town of Ukhia, southeast of Cox's Bazaar, and not all of the RSO's "fighters" are Rohingyas from Myanmar.

The Rohingyas, who are Muslims and speak the same language as the population in the Chittagong area of Bangladesh, are not regarded by the government in Yangon as an indigenous race. Hundreds of thousands of them fled across the border to Bangladesh during a crackdown in 1978, and militant groups soon emerged among the refugees. The UN eventually intervened, and most of the Rohingyas were repatriated to Myanmar. However, in 1991 and 1992, another wave of 250,000 refugees came across the border, and while most of them have also been repatriated, more than 20,000 remain in United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) supervised camps southeast of Cox's Bazaar. An estimated 100,000 Rohingyas live outside the UNHCR's camps, and it is among these destitute and stateless people that various Islamist militant groups have found fertile ground for recruitment.

The RSO was set up in the early 1980s when radical elements among the Rohingyas broke away from the more moderate main grouping, the Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF). Led by a medical doctor from Arakan, Muhammad Yunus, it soon became the main and most militant faction among the Rohingyas in Bangladesh and on the border. Given its more rigid religious stand, the RSO soon secured the support of like-minded groups in the Muslim world. These included the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh and Pakistan, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami in Afghanistan, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) in Jammu and Kashmir, and Angkatan Belia Islam sa-Malaysia (ABIM) - the Islamic Youth Organization of Malaysia. Afghan instructors have been seen in some of the RSO camps along the Bangladesh-Burma border, while nearly 100 RSO rebels were reported to have undergone training in the Afghan province of Khost with Hizb-e-Islami Mujahideen.

The RSO's main military camp was located near the hospital that the Rabitat-al-Aalam-al-Islami had built at Ukhia. At this stage, the RSO acquired a substantial number of Chinese-made RPG-2 rocket launchers, light machine-guns,

ARRESTED FIVE MILITANTS AT MULLAHAT IS THE MEMBER OF JAMAITUL ISLAM MUJAHID: TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS EXIT IN KHULNA AND RAJSHAHI

Translated from The Daily Janakantha dated 08/19/02.



Picture (courtesy The Daily Janakantha): The five arrested militants of JIM (right), Seriously injured Mr. Tarapada Puddar (left), seized Arms, bomb making materials, ammunitions and dresses of Bangladesh Army (bottom right)

"..Although we are trained together, it is difficult to know the names of more than two our militant fellows. This is how we are trained. We have one training camp at Khulna but the major one is in Rajshahi" – one of the arrested militant of the group gave his alibi to police. The Militants who came to slaughter minority leader Mr. Tarapada Puddar, was latter caught by the police with the help from the local people. Mr. Puddar is also the general secretary of local Awami league. Police has arrested the terrorists belonging to Jamaitul Islam Mujahid (JIM) during Saturday early morning raid. According to police, the terrorists has identified them as the active members of JIM and asserted that they are given sword and other sharp weapons for slaughtering people and bicycles to move from place to place. Every two to three months they change their sanctuaries. The terrorist also indicated to police that there were some more arrests of their members in recent days at Dinajpur area.

They have move to the Mullahat of Bagerhat after the last general election. The arrested terrorists have admitted that six other militants in this mission have escaped without mentioning their name.

The goal of JIM is to establish Islamic governance in Bangladesh through armed struggle. In this regards, at Sunday, Police has appealed to the court for seven day custody of the said terrorists. The court has allowed only two days for the police custody.

The son of the seriously injured minority leader Tarapada Puddar has filed a case against the terrorists in the local police station. The seriously injured Mr. Puddar is still in

AK-47 assault rifles, claymore mines and explosives from private arms dealers in the Thai town of Aranyaprathet, near the border with Cambodia, which in the 1980s emerged as a major arms bazaar for guerrilla movements in the region. These weapons were siphoned off from Chinese arms shipments to the resistance battling the Vietnamese army in Cambodia, and sold to any one who wanted, and could afford, to buy them.

The Bangladeshi media gave extensive coverage to the RSO buildup along the border, but it soon became clear that it was not only Rohingyas who were undergoing training in its camps. Many, it turned out, were members of the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS), the youth organization of Bangladesh's Jamaat-e-Islami, and came from the University of Chittagong, where a "campus war" was being fought between Islamist militants and more moderate student groups. The RSO was, in fact, engaged in little or no fighting inside Myanmar.

It is unclear when the now-famous videotape was shot, but it presumably dates from the early 1990s, since by the late 1990s the RSO's training camps southeast of Cox's Bazaar were taken over by Bangladeshi Islamist militants. Bangladesh's main militant outfit, the Hakrat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), was formed in 1992, allegedly with financial support from Osama bin Laden himself. HuJI now has an estimated strength of 15,000 followers and is led by Shawkat Osman aka Maulana or Sheikh Farid in Chittagong. Its members were recruited mainly from students of Bangladesh's more than 60,000 *madrassas* (religious schools) and called themselves the Bangladeshi Taliban. The group has become notorious for masterminding violent attacks on Bangladesh's Hindu minority, as well as on moderate Bangladeshi Muslims. In a statement released by the US State Department on May 21, 2002, HuJI was described as a terrorist organization with ties to Islamist militants in Pakistan.

The existence of firm links between the new Bangladeshi militants and al-Qaeda is established through Fazlul Rahman, leader of the "Jihad Movement in Bangladesh" (to which the HuJI belongs), when he signed the official declaration of jihad against the United States on February 23, 1998. Other signatories included bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri (leader of the Jihad Group in Egypt), Rifa'i Ahmad Taha aka Abu-Yasir (Egyptian Islamic Group) and Sheikh Mir Hamzah (secretary of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan). HuJI sent its own people, as well as Rohingya recruits, to Afghanistan to fight for the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The Rohingyas, especially, were given the most dangerous tasks in the battlefield, clearing mines and portering. According to intelligence sources, Rohingya recruits were paid 30,000 Bangladeshi taka (US\$525) on joining and then 10,000 taka per month. The families of recruits killed in action were offered 100,000 taka. (While these appear to be small sums in dollar terms, they are princely amounts in a country where the annual per capita income works out to a bare \$380.) on to military camps in Afghanistan.

HELP SAVE A LIFE

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Date: September 02, 2002

To Whom It May Concern

This is our great concern to express a message of sorrow that Mr. Hiranmoy Pandey, Assistant Professor of Govt. Mirpur Bangla College, Dhaka, Bangladesh has been suffering from diabetes for last 10 years, and from hypertension for 4 years. The physicians have diagnosed that his both kidneys have been damaged and advised him to go for renal transplantation in India.

In medical science, as we know, kidney transplantation is the most critical surgical treatment. It involves a huge amount of cost in terms of money. The cost for this purpose is estimated to range from Tk. 800,000/- to 900,000/- (US\$ 14,000/- to 15,000/-). The amount includes the cost of renal pre-transplantation preparation, transplantation and post-transplantation care, preparation and treatment cost of the kidney donor, the cost of travelling, boarding and lodge for 3 persons (the patient, the donor and a care taker). Prof. Pandey, being honest and sincere teacher cannot afford to bear the amount needed for such a major surgical treatment.

You might know that Mr. Pandey was elected Vice President (VP) of Jagannath Hall Students' Union, University of Dhaka in early 80s. He gave leadership to establish the rights and legitimate demands of the students of Jagannath Hall. Upon brilliant completion of his education, he chose the profession of teaching ignoring few other attractive offers. He excels in his profession and was selected as the best teacher by the concerned authority.

While I was Provost of Jagannath Hall, University of Dhaka in late 90s, Mr. Pandey was the person whom I found dedicated to form the 'Jagannath Hall Alumni Association'. In this regard, I must mention that our Association could not be structured without his initiative and involvement all the way. He is the founder Joint Secretary of this Association.

In view of his past and present contribution to strengthen the ties and friendship among the ex-students of Jagannath Hall combined with his bright future to add more to establish a society based on human values, I appeal to all our friends, well wishers, social workers and relatives at home and around the globe to come forward to provide assistance to save the life of Prof. Hiranmoy Pandey.

Let us pray for him to the Almighty to save his life.

Sincerely,

Professor Durgadas Bhattacharjee Ph. D
President
Jagannath Hall Alumni Association
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
And
Former Vice-Chancellor
National University, Bangladesh

Send your donation payable to HRCBM, write "For Pandey" in the note. Contact us: info@hrcbm.org

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Recruits were taken mostly via Nepal to Pakistan, where they were trained and sent on to military camps in Afghanistan.

It is not known how many people from this part of Bangladesh - Rohingyas and others - fought in Afghanistan, but the number is believed to be quite substantial. Others have gone to Kashmir and even Chechnya to join forces with Islamist militants there.

In an interview with the CNN in December 2001, American Taliban fighter John Walker Lindh relates that the al-Qaeda-directed Ansar (Companions of the Prophet) Brigades, to which he had belonged in Afghanistan, were divided along linguistic lines: Bengali, Pakistani (Urdu) and Arabic, which suggests that the Bengali-speaking component - Bangladeshi and Rohingya - must have been significant. It is now also becoming clear that some militants fleeing the American strikes in Afghanistan in late 2001 have ended up in Bangladesh. With the heavy American presence in Pakistan, many militants who fled Afghanistan in October and November 2001 have found it safer to hide in third countries. In early 2002, a ship reportedly sailed from Karachi to Chittagong carrying assorted militants from Afghanistan. On May 10-11 2002, nine Islamist fundamentalist groups, including HuJI, met at a camp near Ukhia South and formed the Bangladesh Islamic Manch (association). The new umbrella organization includes groups purporting to represent the Rohingyas and the Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam (MULTA), a small group operating in India's northeast. By June, Bangladeshi veterans of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan were reported to be training members of the new alliance in at least two camps in southern Bangladesh.

An internal document from HuJI lists no less than 19 "training establishments" all over Bangladesh, but it is uncertain how many of them actually offer military training. What is certain, however, is that since a new coalition government led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) took over in October 2001, Bangladesh's Islamist militants have become more vocal and active. The coalition includes, for the first time, two ministers from the Jamaat. The four-party electoral alliance that brought the new coalition government to power also includes a smaller Islamic party, the Islamic Oikya Jote, whose chairman, Azizul Huq, is a member of HuJI's advisory council.

The Bangladeshi authorities have shown no sign of being willing to crack down on these groups and their activities. On the contrary, after some adverse international publicity about the rise of Islamist fundamentalism in Bangladesh earlier this year, the government cracked down on the most moderate of the Rohingya factions, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO), in Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar. ARNO has no known links to al-Qaeda or any of Bangladesh's groups of Islamist militants. It issued a strong statement condemning the crackdown and disassociating itself from the militants. The RSO, on the other hand, was not targeted by the Bangladeshi authorities.

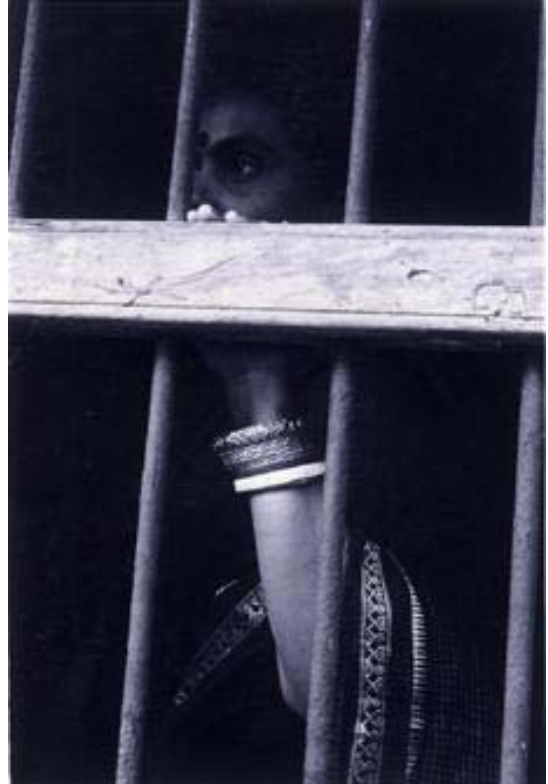
Continued from page 5

For many years, Bangladesh was seen as a moderate, even liberal, Muslim country. This is evidently changing, and the formation of the Bangladesh Islamic Manch in May this year clearly indicates that cooperation between the country's Islamist militants is becoming closer. The presence of trainers from Afghanistan and the arrival of more militants with al-Qaeda connections, demonstrate their participation in an international terrorist network.

Bertil Lintner is a senior writer, Far Eastern Economic Review



Lajja !!



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