

Minorities in Bangladesh: A matter of survival

At least 100 Hindu were killed and 31 were disappeared in 2017 as a result of communal attack in Bangladesh; according to a report of BJHM (Bangladesh Hindu Mohajot). Moreover, it has been confirmed by the report that 782 Hindu have been forced to leave country or have been threatened to leave the country, 23 Hindus have been forcibly converted to Islam, at least 25 Hindu women and children were raped and at least 235 Hindu temples were vandalized.

The report confirms that; the inglorious history of minority attacks which is often referred to the ethnic cleansing; has been continuing in Bangladesh. There is no official report yet in 2018 demonstrating the proper scenario; but it is thought that the number of attack is not less if not more than the previous year.

This Article aims at pointing out the reason of the resurgence in the minority attack in Bangladesh and the possible steps should be taken by minorities to prevent it by analysing the history of minority attacks in Bangladesh.

Historical Scenario:

During 1971 Liberation war, by which Bangladesh got independence, 29% total population were Hindu. But, the percentage is only 8.96% now. This is mainly because of systematic land grabbing, killing, vandalizing religious establishment and force conversion of the minority people in Bangladesh.

During 1971 Liberation war, minority in Bangladesh specially the Hindus were targeted to be killed and tortured alleging their connection with India. As a result, estimated 6 million Hindu Refugees from Bangladesh gathered in India to save their lives. After the Liberation war when Bangladesh became independent, most of them returned to Bangladesh hoping it would be a secular state ensuring equal rights for people from all race and religion. The constitution made by the then Awamileague Government ensured secularism principles in the constitution which resulted in much acceptance of Awamileague as a political party to the minorities of the country.

However, it did not take long to dream be faded for the minority communities of the country, following a dramatic change in Bangladeshi Politics in 1975 after demise of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After 1975 the other political parties apart from Awamileague of the country started to do systematic oppression to the minority with a view to making their survival harder in the country. Though at present Awamileague is in the state power, the hostile environment for the minority in the country has not changed and the main reason behind is Awamileague's reluctance to stick on its secularism characteristics. As a result, in 21st century people in Bangladesh are being attacked only because of their religious identity! Advocate Direndra Ghosh, the chief of the Minority Watch, Bangladesh has recently revealed that, every day at least 500 Hindus are being forced to leave their motherland in Bangladesh.

Reason of the frequent attack in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh has lost its secularism characteristics practically and constitutionally at present. Recently, Bangladeshi Court has upheld the Islam as the state religion repealing Secularism in the constitution. Though, the amendment in the constitution was done by court, it was apparent that such a decision was biased by the government who was reluctant to re-establish secularism in Constitution as a result of their 'compromise' with Hefazat-e-Islam, the biggest Islamist group in Bangladesh. That constitutional change is not an isolated rather consequence of the constant pressure by the radical Muslims of the country. Over the last decade Socio-economically Bangladesh has turned into Islamic controlled system. Thousands of Madrasahs have

been established across the country where minimum tolerance to the people of the other religion is taught. Intolerance for different opinions other than Islam is very visible now a day mainly because of wide spread use of Social Media. In Bangladesh you can't express your free thought now as you will be victim of racial attack by the radical Muslims. And the audacity of them is getting beyond control as there are no preventive measures to stop them. Most of the time the attackers on the minority go unpunished and there is no legal action at all against those atrocities in social media.

During the election minorities in Bangladesh generally support Awamileague which was thought to be better than others in term of securing Minority Rights in Bangladesh. But since after securing power in 2014, in an uncontested election Awamileague has been seemed to be reluctant to take strong actions against the Islamists. This is because, to continue in state power Awamileague has been controlling their political opposition and they do not want any opposition from the Islamist which could create uncomfortable situation in the power. Doing so, they have been implementing one after another demand of the Islamist like removing lady justice sculpture, compromising with Hefazat-E-Islam, and the biggest Islamist supported group of the country. Moreover, Awamileague leaders got involved in minority attack reportedly over the years for land grabbing. In 2017 Miscreants vandalised and looted at least 10 Hindu temples in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar this afternoon along with hundreds of houses of the Hindu community. Later it was appeared from public media investigation that none but Awamileague ally was responsible for that attack. It is established now that being a Awamileague supporter is a double-edged sword for the minorities in Bangladesh as Awamileague opposition attacks the minorities for not supporting Awamileague while Awamileague supporters attack minorities for not casting enough votes during the election.

Road to survival:

The minority in Bangladesh is in such a critical situation where there is no other option than creating strong resistance by the minorities in Bangladesh for their survival. They will also have to decentralize their political support from Awamileague.

Rangpur, Nasirnagar & Ramu, three biggest rampages against the minorities in Bangladesh in recent history, indicates that such attacks were foreseeable. But, surprisingly there were no visible precautions to stop those attacks. It is understandable that any resistance by the minorities would not last long, but a strong message could be sent by such a resistance. During the Gujarat Riot in 2002 minorities in western India were attacked first. Being attacked, they did not sit down rather overcoming the initial loss minorities in Gujarat made strong resistance and turned the attack into riot. Though lots of minorities lost their lives because of the resistance, a strong message was established that eyes would be for eyes.

For the survival in Bangladesh, minorities of Bangladesh should make strong and firm resistance against any attack and turn those attacks in 'riot'!

On the other hand, minorities in Bangladesh should stop their unconditional support to Awamileague for their survival. In India, though minorities are more unlikely to cast their votes for BJP, they are not blind to Congress only. They are divided in their political opinions centrally and regionally. As a result, they are getting a good outcome.

In Andhra Pradesh 4% reservation are secured in employment and educational institutions only for Muslim. In Tamil Nadu the reservation is 3.5% for Muslim and Christian which is 7% in total. In Kerala reservation in Public Service Commission for Muslim is 12%, which is 9% in Tamil Nadu 26.56% of total population in Kerala is Muslim, 9% and 5.6% respectively in AP and

Tamil Nadu.

On the other hand, though the percentage of the minorities comprising of Hindu, Buddhist and Christians in Bangladesh is very marginal of the total population, there is no reservation in any sector for them. Even Awamileague has been unconditionally supported by the minorities; it has done nothing notable for the minorities in their 10 continuous years in power. Rather during the Awamilaegue Regime; abolishment of secularism from the constitution by replacing Islam as state religion has been secured, Islamic group Hefazat-E-Islam has been in much more stronger position by the Awamileague patronization. The most alarming sign comes into light when the President of Bangladesh Awamileague declares that the country will run in accordance with Medina Charter (Islamic Regulations which was drawn up on behalf of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad shortly after his arrival at Medina in 622 CE, flowing the Hijra from Mecca).

In fine, instead of unconditionally supporting Awamileague, minorities in Bangladesh should politically be decentralized and make the political parties dependant on them for their valuable votes. Political decentralization and making strong resistance against any attack could only be the way of survival for the minorities in Bangladesh.

Chandpur Hindu community shaken as local man commits blasphemy towards Islam



amentalists violently attacked the Hindu community located inside Puran Bazaar, Chandpur, riled over the actions of one Milton Kumar Dey whom they accuse of producing blasphemous content against towards Islam.

The Hindu community, a minority group in terms of the Chandpur's (and Bangladesh's) geography, where shaken by an attack reportedly coordinated by local Awami League and some Jamaat-E-Islami members in the area. The attack took place sometime after midnight on Saturday.

The culprits mercilessly wrecked everything in their path, including Hindu symbols in sanctuaries, Puja mantles, with some even attacking Hindu households in the area and the people within. Some locals reported hearing loud, energetic chants of 'Naraye Takbir' during the

incident.

Saturday's fiasco is intimately connected to a local Chandpur man named Milton Kumar Dey, son of Mr Sammbhu Nath Dey and Mrs Mamata Rani Dey. Our local correspondent dug around for some information on him in and around Chandpur. He came to discover that Mr Kumar Dey is Hindu blogger and online activist currently on a study leave in London.

Now the fundamentalist group which laid siege to the peaceful Hindu community in the area claimed that Mr Kumar Dey is guilty of composing and uploading profane articles about Islam on his personal blog.

Aside from the concentrated attack on Hindu establishments, there were also reports that local Awami League cadets surrounded Mr Kumar Dey's home. Local people who live there said that previously area's local chairman reportedly summoned Mr Kumar Dey's parents, and openly threatened them to either make their son stop what he is doing, or simply leave the area. We did track down his house in Chandpur and were surprised to find it locked, and uninhabited. We asked the neighbours about the incident and they informed us that they have not seen Mr Kumar Dey or his family for a long time now. The neighbours believe that the Mr Kumar dey's family abandoned the premises out of fear for their lives, given the fiasco in Chandpur over Mr Kumar Dey's activities as a blogger and activist.

Worryingly enough the local people claimed that fundamentalists blamed right from the start and would rebuke them for seemingly trivial things such as celebrating their Puja festivals, performing 'kirtans', spiritual singing sessions etc and so on, claiming that the ensuing ruckus distracts them from conducting their own prayer sessions ('namaaz') properly. Taranath Das, a local resident complained to our reporter that, "local police did not come on time. In fact, the local Police officer Mr. Shahin was reluctant to take proper action against the attackers".

Mr Kumar Dey was in the UK at the time when the incident occurred and his home was surrounded, so was thus unavailable for comment. Unfortunately, we were also unable to get a hold of him through our contacts in London.

Such uncertainty leaves the air inside Puran Bazaar feeling heavy. It is plausible that things may escalate again in this current climate.

ICR Foundation expressed their satisfaction over Nizami's verdict

The [International Crimes Research Foundation](#), a London based global research organisation has expressed their satisfaction over Matiur Rahman Nizami's review petition verdict. ICRF sent us a press release earlier today where they mentioned that "not only is the tribunal an embodiment of righteousness and justice in the country, today it is a role model for others around the world to follow and leads by example when it comes to tackling the culture of non-justice. Even though it was established in 1971 in a bid to resolve international crimes and took nearly 39 years to come into full force, the tribunal has nonetheless has managed to prove to the civil world that it is better to start late rather than not do it at all. Perhaps that won't change things significantly or instantly, but it is a significant step towards battling non-justice under any circumstances."

ICRF welcomed the death penalty given by the apex court of Bangladesh as this punishment is

“within the justice system of Bangladesh and they express their utmost respect to that ICRF went further saying that that they fully respect the current ideas and opinions of those in favor of death penalties and those who are not, it is their belief that each nation reserves the right to enforce capital punishment, the way its constitution permits or allows it, which after all is one of its most fundamental rights. Therefore they respect the laws and the boundaries each nation has set out for them and they are fully entitled to deliver capital punishment the way they have devised them to be.”

Though ICRF is satisfied about the standard and procedure of the ICTBD trial but they also commented that “there is still room for improvement regarding the security of ICTBD personnel as well as witness protection. ICRF thanked Bangladeshi government on that note who embarked and are successfully concluding this quest”

ICRF also mentioned that “Nizami’s verdict and subsequent upholding by the Supreme Court as well as appellate division is another giant step forward for the justice system of Bangladesh and its implications. The whole world in fact is a beneficiary of the ICTBD’s actions for the nature of international crimes is such that, they can be perceived as transgressions towards the whole of the human race in general. We hope that the ICTBD will reinvigorate and inspire justice systems around the world to jump into action.”

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ICRF Press Release Regarding the recent incident

International Crimes Research Foundation from UK has sent us following press release regarding the recent incident in Bow Road, London:

Press Release

On the 1st of March 2016 ICR Foundation’s London-based members Barrister Nijhoom Majumder, Ajanta Deb Roy, Kamrul Hasan and Mohammed Bappi Chowdhury, attended a meeting arranged by Gonojagoron Moncho inside a restaurant at Bow Road for their upcoming event on 26th March.

However unbeknownst to them, a few unsavoury individuals were covertly snapping photos and videos of our members. Upon discovering what they were doing, members of the ICR Foundation and Gonojagoron Moncho present there, chose to approach and question the men about their actions. Once they’d caught up with them one of the men roughly shoved aside two of our members and fled the scene immediately. Afterwards, our members sought the help of the British Metropolitan Police who came in and arrested the remaining perpetrator.

The ICR Foundation is perturbed and a little concerned by this incident, to say the least. Recent times have seen the blogger murders rise to a fever pitch in Bangladesh and many of our members, in fact, are under the cosh from credible death threats. We have expressed our concerns before on this matter and have notified the law enforcement authorities of these distresses. It is important to mention that all the individuals who were present at that meeting on 1st March were all simultaneously activists and respected members of the Gonojagoron Moncho UK as well.

Every one of our members scattered across different corners of the world has been in constant contact with the law enforcement authorities in their respective geo locations regarding these issues. And safe to say they have received the appropriate amount of attention and security without question. However if these matters are not dealt with swiftly, unlawful incidents such as the one in Bow Road might continue to grow in number.

The incident in Bow Road is the start of a daunting pattern which matches the murder of all others blogger conducted by the Islamic extremist in Bangladesh thus far. They were first followed, their routines memorized and then the lives were snuffed out of them at times outside their houses (at times inside their homes even), their workplaces, or on the open streets and so on. These sorts of activities are in direct violation of the rules and regulations set forth by the UK and EU.

Again we'd like to reiterate our anxiety on this whole affair at Bow Road. We urge that the British Metropolitan Police dig deeper as to why selected members of our organization were followed, and make swift decisions to settle the matter.

International Crimes Research Foundation

5th March 2016

Earthquake hits India's Manipur state

An earthquake measuring 6.8 magnitude has hit northeast India, near its border with Myanmar and Bangladesh, the US Geological Survey (USGS) has said.

The quake hit at 04:35 local time (23:05 GMT Sunday) about 29km (18 miles) northwest of Imphal, the capital of Manipur state, according to USGS.

Strong tremors have been felt across the region.



Our reporter in Dhaka says many people were seen fleeing their homes in Bangladesh.

USGS issued a yellow alert for casualties and damage, with a 35% likelihood of between one and 10 deaths from the tremor.

The earthquake was originally reported to have measured 6.8 magnitude.

The region has a history of powerful earthquakes caused by the northward collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates. They are moving towards each other at a rate of 4-5cm per year.

In 2005, a magnitude 7.6 quake in Pakistan-administered Kashmir left more than 75,000 people dead.

In April 2015, Nepal suffered its worst earthquake on record with 9,000 people killed and about 900,000 homes damaged or destroyed.

No force in world can stop Bangladesh's war crimes trial

The BNP chief's paying tribute to Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial was nothing but a mockery, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday, adding no one in the world could stop the war crimes trial initiated by her government.

The Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators, including Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, killed poets, writers, teachers, journalists, doctors and many other intellectuals from different fields on December 14, 1971 in the then East Pakistan.



Bangladesh' Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Their aim was to make the country to be born, Bangladesh, intellectually bankrupt, the PM said at a discussion organised by the ruling party at the Institution of Engineers in the capital to mark Martyred Intellectuals Day.

"Those who committed such crimes are now undergoing trial and their trial will go on alongside the war crimes trial," said Hasina, chief of the ruling Awami League.

Earlier, a one-minute silence was observed remembering the martyrs of December 14, 1971, four martyred national leaders and all the martyrs of the Liberation War, democratic movements of

the country and the August 15, 1975 carnage.

The BNP chief is following in the footsteps of her husband Ziaur Rahman, the PM said, criticising Khaleda Zia for making those, executed for war crimes, ministers during her tenure as prime minister.

How she could pay tribute to the martyred intellectuals after making war criminals ministers, Hasina questioned.

“This is nothing but a mockery... She (Khaleda) thinks our people do not understand anything, but they understand everything.”

Before the recent execution of two war criminals, Khaleda returned from London in a hurry, Hasina said, in a bid to save them through waging a movement.

The Prime Minister also took a swipe at those freedom fighters who accompanied Khaleda to the memorial.

Hasina continued saying that following the assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members on August 15, 1975, Bangladesh lost its glory and dignity it had attained through the war.

But as the Awami League assumed power after 21 years, she said, Bangladesh began regaining its lost glory.

Neither of the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators could forget their defeat and so they want to destroy the spirit of the Liberation War, halt the economic development of the country and force Bangladesh into slavery again, the PM said.

“Their conspiracy is going on and will go on, but we must move on foiling all the conspiracies.”

Hasina said some considered Ziaur Rahman the proclaimer of independence and a freedom fighter.

“If Zia were a true freedom fighter, he could not have put war criminals in state power.”

Hasina also reiterated her resolve not to bow to anyone and lead Bangladesh into becoming a hunger and poverty-free prosperous country by 2041.

[News Source](#)
