

Annexure 2

Anti-Hindu attacks rock Bangladesh

By Swadesh Roy

Anti-Hindu attacks are on the rise in Bangladesh, with supporters of the Jammate-E-Islami Bangladesh (Jammat) and the Bangladesh National party (BNP) demolishing Hindu temples and statues, and vandalizing houses and shops with Hindu owners. Usually, the vandals are known to the victims; most are their neighbors.

According to local media, in the last 24 days the Jammat and BNP has attacked at least 319 temples, houses and shops of the Hindu community. Jammat stated its attacks in response to the death verdict passed upon Senior Islamist leader Delwar Hossain Sayeedi in February for crimes committed during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence. But from the very first day BNP people joined them, making life hell for Hindu communities in villages and the small towns where Jammat-BNP organizations are powerful.

On March 20 and 21, in Bogra, a northern district in Bangladesh BNP-Jammat supporters attacked five temples and vandalized nine statues, with the police refusing to take any action. Instance of authorities shielding the vandals have come from not only Bogra but many other places where the ruling Awami league leaders is in power giving shelter to the criminals of Jammat and BNP.

Media reports have said that in Bashkhal, southern Bangladesh, Jammat people vandalized and torched at least 40 shops with Hindu owners. The police refusal to take action has infuriated the Hindu community which traditionally has supported the Awami League, which is seen as a pseudo secular political force.

The Jammat and BNP are now playing the minority card very tactfully, with the main goal of teaching Hindus that they are not safe in Bangladesh even Awami league holds power. And that if the Jammat-BNP takes the reins, it would be better for them to leave.

"We will kill all the Malauns (they called the Hindus as Malauns [infidel] and Bangladesh will be 'Banglasthan' [Muslim only] like Pakistan," read a post of the website Basserkella, which is run by Jammat and their student organization Shibir. The attacks have drawn condemnation from across the globe, with some calling for the US to now class the Jammat as a terrorist organization. While the BNP is still seen as a moderate Muslim party, few appreciate the way it is treating the Hindu minority.

Despite the Awami League's failure to crackdown on the Jammat's excesses, the honest part of the civil society of Bangladesh and the present government want to secure the lives, the properties and temples of the Hindu community. Government, the civil society, and the educated young generation are trying to stop these attacks.

But the Jammat and BNP have changed the style of their attack. They are not attacking the minority with a mob, but in hit-and-run style assaults. And they are doing it every day. They want to give the message to the minority they are not safe on this soil and must go to India.

If the Bangladesh government wants to stop the violence they have to ban the politics of Jammat.

Swadesh Roy, Executive Editor, the Daily Janakantha, Dhaka, Bangladesh, he can be reached at swadeshroy@gmail.com

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/SOU-01-280313.html