

Border restriction eased 'in view of Ramadan'

Essentials coming from Myanmar through 20 points

MUAZZEM HOSSAIN SHAKIL, Cox's Bazar

Essential items like rice, pulse, gram, onion and spices are being brought to Bangladesh from Myanmar almost freely through at least 20 border points, traders and other sources said.

Border forces are lenient in this regard to keep flow of items during the Ramadan, traders said.

The Bangladesh-Myanmar border stretches about 100 kilometres from Teknaf in Ukha in Naikhongchhari in Bandarban.

Traders said, at some points, law enforcers even help them bring essentials and cows from Myanmar.

A top BDR official in Teknaf, said they were instructed verbally to ease restriction regarding flow of food items during the Ramadan.

But customs officials said they are not aware about "opening up of the border".

Revenue earning at Teknaf land port has decreased because of almost free flow of essentials, customs officials there said. Taking advantage of alleged lax vigilance by border guards, traders have hoarded large quantities of different items in places close to Teknaf border. But they are hesitating to supply those to other districts fearing seizure by customs officials, they said.

Teknaf Border Traders

Association President Md Hashim said traders are bringing in large quantities of food items including fish from Myanmar but facing hurdles to supply those to other districts.

On investigation, it was gathered that traders imported 130 tonnes of pelom (one kind of pulse), 321 tonnes of 'mush kalai' (pulse), 156 tonnes of coriander, 453 tonnes of gram and 737 tonnes of cumin through Teknaf port last month.

Teknaf Customs Inspector Nu-Chha-Pru Marma said some BDR members recently deposited Tk 33,500 against 73 cows (Tk 500 for each cow). But he is unaware about the destination of the cows. A top official of 40 Rifles Battalion in Naikhongchhari also admitted that 73 and 67 cows were allowed on two occasions through one border point.

He said inflow of goods has been eased as there is 'instruction' to continue it till the Eid-ul-Fitr. Traders can bring essential commodities

like gram, pulse, rice, onions and cows, he said. But this of not at liberty as traders have to keep BDR personnel informed, he said.

Customs officials seized four trucks carrying pulse and spices worth about Tk 25 lakh at Balukhali in Ukha on Teknaf-Cox's Bazar Road last week.

Trader Md Ayub Prokash of Teknaf who owned the goods and was taking those to Chittagong said BDR and police did not obstruct him but customs officials seized the trucks.

Md Mokarram Hossain, assistant commissioner of customs, here said the district administration instructed him to seize goods brought in without permission from customs department.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Aminul Islam said he is not aware of such flow of goods through the border. "It will be unfair to bring in goods evading land port because this will increase smuggling", he said.

BNP leader killed by outlaws in Pabna

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least two people including a BNP leader were killed by outlaws in Ataikula and Bhangura on Friday, police said.

The victims are Mohammed Ali, son of late Shukur Ali of Dilpashra village in Bhangura and Atai Mollah, son of Khoir Mollah of Shrikal village in Ataikula.

Of the victims, Mohammad Ali was the secretary of Dilpashra union BNP and a former UP member, police said.

Police and local people said, a gang of outlaws wearing masks shot at Mohammed Ali at his house resulting in his death on the spot at about 9.30 pm on Friday.

The killers left the place chanting slogans like 'Joi Sarbahara,' according to Bhangura Police Station officer-in-charge Sayed Shahid Alam.

In another incident, outlaws kidnapped Atai Mollah from his house and chopped him to death near a crematory ground in Ataikula in the early hours of Friday.

Police sent the bodies to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy.



A boy trying to catch fish in stagnant water on the courtyard yesterday as incessant rains in last two days inundated most areas of Magura town.

Journos becoming targets of politicians in Khagrachhari

Seven tortured, 35 cases filed

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Journalists are increasingly becoming targets of politicians of both the ruling and opposition parties in the districts.

They are being assaulted and at least 35 cases have been filed against them in the recent time.

The journalists facing cases are: Mohammad Azim-Ul-Huq of Prothom Alo, Mohammad Nurul Azam and Indrajit Banik of Samakal, Khagrachhari Press Club vice-president Jiten Barua, Sukumar Barua of Bir Chattagram Mancha, Panchhari Press Club president Sattajit Chakma, Abu Daud Muhammad of Naya Diganta, Omar Faruq Shamim of Bhorer Kagoj and Pradip Chowdhury of

Sangbad. More than seven journalists were assaulted or tortured by politicians.

Prothom Alo journalist Azim-Ul-Huq said he faced 17 false cases for publishing series of stories against the illegal activities of the ruling party men. BNP lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan and BNP leaders Mahafuz, Mostafizur Rahman Millat, M N Absar, Abdus Salam, Joyal Abedin, Nazrul Islam, Belal Hossen and Saidul Islam Babul filed the cases. x

Another journalist, Jiten Barua of Janakantha also faced 17 cases.

Sukumar Barua of Bir Chattagram Mancha was arrested by plainclothes policemen at midnight following filing of a case against him some-

time in October last year. However, he was freed after two days due to continuous agitation of local journalists.

Samakal journalist Nurul Azam was assaulted by BNP activists for publishing a Union Parishad (UP) election story on March 8, 2003. Two local BNP leaders led the attackers. They also threatened to kill him.

Local BNP leaders and their fellow men tortured Samakal journalist Indrajit Banik of Matiranga upazila for a report on grabbing land of a member of the minority community.

Journalists are also often threatened by activists of Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) for publishing news.

NOMINATION FROM SHERPUR -2 BNP faction vandalises rival's party office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Rival supporters of BNP Whip Zahed Ali Chowdhury and a high official aspiring for ticket brought out separate processions at Nalitabari upazila headquarters in Sherpur district Friday evening demanding party nomination for their leaders.

At one stage, Zahed Ali's supporters vandalised the office of BNP activists loyal to forest and environment secretary Haider Ali, aspiring for alliance ticket to contest from Sherpur-2 constituency (Nalitabari-Nokla) in the coming election.

When contacted over phone yesterday, Haider said he would retire in December next year and may resign from government service if his nomination is ensured. He said people in the area want him to contest from the constituency. He admitted Friday's incident.

Witnesses said supporters of

Haider Ali brought out a procession led by joint secretary of Nalitabari upazila Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Zahangir Alam from Araiani Bazar at upazila headquarters at around 6:30pm. They carried posters and chanted slogans demanding nomination for Haider Ali from Sherpur-2 (Nalitabari-Nokla) constituency in the coming election.

They held a meeting at their office in Jail Road area.

Being informed, Whip Zahed Ali's supporters brought out another procession in the upazila headquarters. Angry processionists vandalised the party office of Haider Ali's supporters at the upazila headquarters, the sources said.

The incident took place when Whip Zahed Ali was inaugurating a pump house of the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) at Garkanda in the upazila, sources said.

Talking to local newsmen Friday

night, JCD leader Zahangir Alam alleged that supporters of Whip Zahed Ali, led by Nalitabari upazila BNP president Nurul Amin vandalised their party office.

He also alleged that BNP workers no more wants Whip Zahed Ali as nominee as he did not do any mentionable development work in the area during his tenure.

On contact, Nalitabari upazila BNP president Nuru Amin admitted that some local BNP leaders and activists vandalised the office of Haider Ali's supporters but he was not involved in it.

"Some people having no contact with people and BNP leaders are trying to create trouble in the party. Whip Zahed Ali Chowdhury actually is an honest, energetic and experienced man. There is no alternative to Zahed Ali in the constituency as he has done a lot of development works in Nalitabari and Nokla," he added.



Youth Human Rights Forum, a local NGO, formed a human chain in front of Aswani Kumar Hall in Barisal city yesterday demanding compulsory provision for keeping medical kits in all transports to meet emergency situations.

PBCP factions hold separate rallies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The two rival factions of Parbatya Bangalee Chhatra Parishad (PBCP) yesterday brought out separate processions and held rallies demanding scrapping of the CHT peace accord.

Speakers at the rallies also criticised UNDP for its "discriminatory" policy in the CHT, calling it biased towards indigenous people.

One faction of PBCP in Rangamati is led by its president Md. Solaiman and the other by Md. Shafiqul Islam, known to be loyal to BNP lawmaker and CHT Development Board Chairman Wadud Bhuiyan.

Speakers at the rallies alleged that UNDP is providing all kinds of facilities to indigenous people and depriving Bangalees.

15X2

4X3

8X3

5X2

1X1