

Rise in border killings regrettable, puzzling

Says Foreign Minister Abdul Momen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

It is shameful and puzzling that border killings have increased in recent times, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday.

"Indian government has always been promising that not a single person would be killed [in the border]. Yet, it continues to happen. We also have an agreement that no lethal weapon would be used in the border. Yet it's happening," he told reporters.

Momen was addressing a press conference on the prime minister's visit to Italy on February 4-6 at the foreign ministry.

He said the government is very concerned over the issue, and has summoned the Indian high commissioner and wanted to know why border killings continue.

"Especially this year, border killings have increased significantly. It is very regrettable," he said, adding that recently seven such killings took place within two weeks.

Momen said the foreign ministry recently told the Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh it was very shameful that such border killings were taking place when the India-Bangladesh relations are so good.

"We don't want a single death in the border, but sadly it is occurring," the minister said.

High officials of Border Guard

Bangladesh (BGB) and India's Border Security Force (BSF) also discussed the issue and agreed to bring the killings to zero.

Momen said the Indian side, in different times, raised various arguments. For example, members of BSF posted anew that they do not have that level of teaching [on the issue of border killing] and sometimes Bangladeshis cross the border to Indian territory when they are shot.

"Citing such instances, they say they haven't killed them in the border, but in their territory," he told reporters.

He also said, "There are some 'greedy people'. They bring commodities from India, but enter Indian side to bring those. I would request them not to sacrifice life for little money."

Citing Indian side as saying, Momen said, sometimes gangs in the border areas shoot Indian soldiers, which prompt the Indian forces to shoot back.

"We want an amicable solution to this. We don't want a single border killing."

BANGLADESH, ITALY MAY SIGN THREE MoUs

Bangladesh and Italy may sign three bilateral memorandums of understanding (MoUs) during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's four-day visit to Rome.

The MoUs include cultural exchanges,

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Sales at flower shops typically increase after every election day, but yesterday's came with a twist. After both the DSCC and DNCC polls were won by Awami League candidates, florists started stacking their shops with boat-shaped bouquets. Inset, a man is about to hop on a bike with his boat-shaped flower bouquet, possibly to hand it over to a victorious AL candidate. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Increasing human resource export key issue

Bangladesh, Qatar to hold talks today, tomorrow in Doha

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bangladesh is set to hold talks with one of its major labour receiving countries Qatar today and tomorrow with a hope to see rise in hire of Bangladeshi migrant workers by the Gulf country.

The Joint Technical Committee (JTC) meeting will aim to boost cooperation in labour recruitment between the two countries as well as look into issues regarding migrant workers' safety and welfare.

The meeting is scheduled for February 2 to 5 in Doha, says a government order.

Secretary of Expatriates' Welfare Ministry Salim Reza will lead a Bangladesh delegation at the meeting, it says.

According to an official at Bangladesh mission in Qatar, crucial talks on several labour recruitment issues will take place at the meeting.

The under-secretary of Qatar ministry of administrative development, labour and social affairs will lead the Qatari delegation, he added.

Besides, issues on hiring workers and "mutual recognition" of their skills will be given priority, he said, seeking anonymity.

Hiring of Bangladeshi workers by Qatar has declined in past few years.

In 2015, the Gulf country hired about 1.23 lakh Bangladeshi workers and it dropped to 1.20 lakh in the following year, says data of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

In the subsequent years, Qatar hired 82,012 workers and 76,560 workers. Last year, the number was 50,292, says BMET data.

The Bangladesh mission official said like some other Arab countries, Qatar also undertook a policy in 2017, prioritising its own citizens and Arabs over foreign nationals in case of hiring workers in some sectors.

He said Qatar hired many construction workers from Bangladesh for its massive infrastructural development ahead of FIFA World Cup 2022 for which Qatar is the host nation.

Those development activities are about to be completed and the workers will have to seek new employment opportunities, he said, adding that now the Gulf country will need manpower for security and hospitality sectors ahead of the World Cup.

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Govt prioritises vocational education: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has given utmost importance to vocational education as the world needs skilled manpower for the upcoming fourth industrial revolution.

"...we need skilled manpower and that's why we've given utmost importance to vocational education," she said.

The prime minister said this while inaugurating a three-day national conference of IDEB and international conference on "Skills Readiness for Achieving SDGs and Adopting IR 4.0" at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in the capital.

IDEB and the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC) in Manila, the Philippines jointly organised the event in association with the Ministry of Education, Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), and Bangladesh Technical Education Board as co-partners.

Hasina said not only Bangladesh but also the world will need skilled manpower in the coming days. "Those who'll go abroad will go with technical knowledge, and for

that we've reformed our education system giving priority to vocational training."

She also mentioned that the government is giving assistance to private institutions that are providing technical trainings.

The PM said the world is competitive and the government wants to build the manpower of the country in such a way so that they could compete anywhere.

She mentioned that the government has set up 500 polytechnic institute in public and private initiative over the last 11 years while initiatives have been taken to increase the capacity of the public institutes to 1 lakh from 25,000.

Under the Indian Line of Credit to increase the capability of the 49 polytechnic institutes, Hasina said, the government is building one 10-storey building, female hostel, workshop and lab in each polytechnic institute spending Tk 2,600 crore.

She said the government has taken a programme to establish at least one polytechnic institute in every upazila. Already, 100 polytechnic institutes have been set up creating some 6,400 posts of teachers and employees.

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'Police submitted the charge sheet without telling us'

Alleges family of Rajib, who died in a road accident in 2018

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police submitted the charge sheet to a Dhaka court on December 22 last year against two drivers in a case filed over the death of Rajib Hossain, who succumbed to his injuries in April 2018 after getting stuck between two speeding buses. However, the victim's family was not made aware of the charge sheet's filing until yesterday.

Sub-inspector Idris Ali of Shahbagh Police Station, also investigation officer of the case, had submitted the charge sheet against BRTC bus driver Wahid Ali Sardar (35), and Sajan Paribahan's Khorshed Alam (50).

They were charged under section 304 (B) of Bangladesh penal code, which grants imprisonment for three years if proven guilty.

The submission of charge sheet came under the limelight yesterday and the victim's family alleged that the investigation

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A tragedy that could've been avoided

9-month-old drowns in bucket of water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdullah had just learnt to crawl. This milestone in the nine-month-old's life had the entire family elated.

The apple of everyone's eye, Abdullah was doted over by everyone. Him learning to crawl was something that brought a festive mood in the family.

But it was reaching this milestone that proved to be fatal. Around 10:30am yesterday, when his father Obaidullah was out of their Sabujbagh home and mother Aklima was busy with household work, he crawled to the bathroom and possibly tried to play with a bucket of water.

Just minutes later, Aklima noticed her son was missing. She searched and found the baby drowned in the bucket's water, said OC Mahub Alam of Sabujbagh Police Station. The family took the baby to Dhaka Medical College Hospital right away but it was too late.

"We are devastated. We cannot accept this sudden death," said Majedul Islam, an uncle of the baby.

Such unexpected infant deaths take place regularly in the city and elsewhere, especially in flat residences. Experts said only increased supervision and more awareness by parents can prevent these tragedies.

"Cases of children between the age of eight and 18 months slipping out of sight and drowning in water buckets have become a common issue of urbanisation," said Aminur Rahman, director (drowning prevention) of Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh.

Since it is not possible for parents to watch their children round the clock, they must keep bathroom doors shut, put obstacle before the doors and keep buckets or tubs empty, he said.

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BLIND MAN'S LIGHT... Visually-impaired Billal makes a living by seeking alms. On his own, it would be difficult for him to ply the risky streets of Dhaka. But he's lucky to have found a companion in his 4-year-old daughter, who takes him where he needs to go from the start of the day till returning home. This photo was taken in Moghbazar's rail gate area recently.

Eventful first day

SAYYED MOHMUD ULLAH

The month-long Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela 2020, the country's largest book fair commemorating the heroes of language movement, began at Bangla Academy premises and the adjacent Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, with a record number of 560 organisations participating this year.

With the theme "Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu", Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the book fair at Bangla Academy around 3pm.

As soon as gates opened around 5pm, earnest booklovers entered the premises.

In the evening, a fire broke out at stall-616 belonging to Rabeya books at Suhrawardy Udyan. Fire service sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at the stall. "But no casualty was reported," said Rifat Hawladar, an attendant at the stall. The fire was brought under control with the help of the fire service.

As it was the first day of the fair, not all stalls were opened or decorated completely, but that did not hamper the festivity among youths who visited the venues after passing a chaotic day of elections the previous day.

"I haven't bought anything today, I've just browsed a bit," said Raihana Koly, a student of City College. Workers involved in setting up stalls said they would complete the remaining work by today. "As it was the inaugural ceremony, we could not work in the afternoon due to security reasons," said Manik Mia, a worker seen near Jatiya Grantha Kendra on the academy premises.

Publishers from across the country are participating in the fair with a wide variety of books while Bangla Academy

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DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE
Can Bangladesh Take Advantage of The Digital Age
Organiser: Brac Institute of Governance and Development
Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Mohakhali
Time: 3:30pm

WORKSHOP
Performing Life
Organiser: Performance Art Bangladesh
Venue: National Museum
Time: 10am

FILM SCREENING
Infinity Minus Infinity
Organiser: British Council
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Time: 4pm

DISCUSSION
On Wet Land and Biodiversity
Organiser: American Center and USAID
Venue: American Center
Time: 3pm

BOOK FAIR
Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela
Venue: Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Uddyan
Time: 3pm

DISCUSSION
International Language of Children's Literature
Organiser: Child Centric Creative Center
Venue: British Council, Fuller Road
Time: 9am

Deploy magistrates to take action against polluters: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the public administration secretary to deploy five executive magistrates within a month under the Department of Environment (DoE), to take necessary action against air and environment pollution across the country.

The court also ordered the DoE to formulate a guideline with the help of relevant experts from universities and NGOs to prevent pollution and improve air quality, then submit the guideline before it.

The director general of DoE has been asked to submit a report on compliance of the directives before the court by March 10.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order while hearing a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), seeking necessary order to prevent air and environment pollution in the country.

During the hearing, DoE Director General

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