

Students of seven Indian states to campaign against illegal Bangladeshis

AFP, GUWAHATI

An influential students' group on Sunday said they would campaign across India's seven northeastern states to stop the region from being swamped by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

The North East Student's Organisation (NESO), the apex body of all student groups in the region, said they would start the "mass movement" from June in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.

"The region's security is under threat due to unabated infiltration, while the indigenous population run the risk of being outnumbered in their own land," NESO chairman Samujjal Bhattacharya told AFP.

The threat comes in the wake of a federal government report that estimated about 1.5 million illegal foreign nationals had moved to India's northeastern states since 1987.

"We shall be mobilising public support, hold rallies and demonstrations, and launch a concerted agitation to see that all illegal migrants are detected and deported immediately," said Paul Lyngdoh, NESO's general secretary.

"The regions demographic pattern has changed and the Bangladeshis are posing a threat to local cultural traditions," he added.

The students' group have demanded the international borders along Bangladesh should be "fenced with barbed wire" and heavy deployment of border guards to check the infiltration.

India and Bangladesh share a

border stretching over 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles).

The powerful All Assam Students' Union (AASU) launched a violent anti-foreigners agitation in Assam during the early 1980s, which led to the death of hundreds of people.

All the regional state governments have been irked by the steady flow of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

"There is a need to seal the borders not only to prevent infiltration, but also to deal (with) insurgency," Tripura chief minister Manik

Raped teenage girl

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dam near their home. She was admitted to the hospital in an unconscious state the following day.

Family sources said the same armed group led by Subash Das and Moslem stormed into the female ward of the hospital at 2.30 am and forcibly took away the girl, confining her mother in a room.

Civil Surgeon Dr Mostafa confirmed the incident.

Over 1000 held

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listed terrorist Nagu alias Nagaiya, 26 a notorious criminal accused in as many as 15 cases on the first day of a nation-wide drive from Motijharna area under Khulshi thana in the early hours of yesterday.

Another listed terrorist Bikash Kanti Dutta, 24 and one Md Alamgir, 30, convicted for life term imprisonment, were arrested on Saturday night in separate raids in MM Ali Road under Kotwali thana and Kalurghat Industrial Area under Chandgaon thana respectively.

Rafiqul new air chief

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General Mohammad Abu Ishaq Ibrahim.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen M Harun-or-Rashid adorned the insignia of Major General to the promoted officers.

Born on February 2, 1952, Air Commodore M Rafiqul Islam, ndu, psc hails from Matlab under Chandpur district. He had his early education in PAF College, Sargodha.

On graduation from Pakistan Air Force Academy, Resalpur, he was commissioned on March 14, 1971 as a GD(Pilot). During his service career, he commanded flying squadrons, and was in charge of the BAF Academy and different BAF Bases. He served as Director of Air Operations and Director of Air

Training. He also served as a Directing Staff in the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur. Presently, he is the Air Officer Commanding of BAF Base Bashar. A graduate of DSCSC, Mirpur, Air Commodore Islam attended National Defence University in China. He served as Bangladesh Defence Adviser in Malaysia during 1994-97. He was on deputation to Biman Bangladesh Air Lines as its Managing Director from 1997 to 2000.

Air Commodore Islam, an active flier, has over 5000 flying hours to his credit. He is a vastly travelled person who visited many countries. He is a keen golfer and takes pleasure in reading.

Rejoinder and our reply

FROM PAGE 1

in the 1980s and led almost all the anti-autocratic movements, including the mass upsurge in 1990."

"The report was made only to tarnish my political image," he said, charging that the reporter used his quotes without talking to him.

Quamrul Islam Sajjad protested his inclusion in a list of top terrorists in Chittagong. "It's a conspiracy to tarnish my image as I was a complainant in a case against police."

In addition, he gave a long resume of the positions he had held in BNP and other organisations in Chittagong.

Our reply

Abu Sufian in his rejoinder alleged that The Daily Star's claim about illegal arms in his possession was false. However, we have records that show he is accused in six criminal cases. The charges against him include murder, attempt to murder, rioting and possessing illegal arms. He is marked as an absconding accused in police records.

According to official records, the cases against Sufian filed with the Chandgaon thana are: case no. 8(11)98 under sections 147, 148, 149, 332 and 353; case no. 30(12)99 under sections 147, 148, 149, 323 and 327; and case no. 8(1)2001 under sections 19(A) of the arms act and section 3 of the explosives act.

At Panchlaish thana, the cases

against him are: case no. 53(6)99 under sections 147, 148, 326, 326, 307; and case no. 35(11)97 under sections 147, 148, 149, 302, 324 and 326.

The latest case no. 9(4)2001 under sections 147, 148, 149, 332 and 353 and section three of the explosive act is with the Chandgaon thana. Police said Sufian was wanted in this case. Besides, at least two general diaries were also recorded against him with the Chandgaon thana.

The story was not one sided. Abu Sufian's denial about his terrorist connections - which he made to our Chittagong correspondent - was clearly incorporated in the story.

Regarding Advocate Quamrul Islam Sajjad, who also denied his involvement in terrorist activities, record shows that he is accused in several cases on charge of murder and mugging. The cases include one bearing no. 5(12)97 under sections 147, 148, 149, 323, 427, 385 and 379; and another no. 54(11)97 under sections 148, 149 and 302. Only recently, another criminal case has been filed against him under the Public Safety Act.

Furthermore, 17 general diaries were also recorded with the Doublemooring thana against the BNP leader, who is also included in a list of terrorists recently prepared by the Chittagong police.

Dipu Chowdhury Protests

In a faxed message, Dipu

'Noise pollution' hampers

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mount to banning student politics and the democratic movement.

However, most student leaders were found unaware of the physical and social consequences of noise pollution.

Amplified sound of loud speakers during rallies at Arts Building, known also as Kala Bhaban, and Science Annex Building is much higher than the tolerable decibel level. Noisy political programmes are regularly held in front of the Kala Bhaban, Bata Tala, on the foot of the Aparajeyo Bangla, DUCSU building and at the Central Shaheed Minar premises, near the Science Annex Building.

The Dean of Arts Faculty also said the authorities are willing to build a stage for holding rallies at Mall Chatter or any other place far away from the academic buildings, for that matter, if the student bodies agree.

He said they are eager to maintain an environment friendly atmosphere at the university, but the student organisations seem least bothered about environment and the rights of others.

A student of the Department of Sociology said that the authorities should take the matter up with the political leaders and reach an understanding immediately.

Sources said a proposal by the Senate for a ban on use of loud speakers at the academic premises in June last year drew scathing criticism from different student organisations.

Angry BCL activists held a spontaneous rally at the Aparajeyo Bangla using dozens of loud speakers while Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Bangladesh Chhatra Maitri (BCM) and Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) brought out separate processions protesting the move.

Sarkar said.

"In Tripura, the militants operate from across the border, enter the state, strike at targets and then sneak back into their camps with ease," he added.

Bijoy Hrangkhwal, a former militant chief of the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), said Tripura was once a dominant tribal area, "but now we are minorities in our land due to unabated influx."

He said tribal youth have taken to arms to simply protect their rights and indigenous identity.

DESA

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be installed by June this year while 250-set auto switch capacitor bank by August to manage the low-voltage problem, he added.

Shamsul Alam said DESA is implementing maintenance and rehabilitation projects to make the power supply system fault-free. Recently, 450 new transformers were installed along with previous 18 132/33 KV sub-stations, 33 33/11 sub-stations and around 7,000 distribution transformers, he said.

Moreover, 250 transformers would be installed by June while 500 transformers in July, he said, adding that 30 km line had been replaced and 20 km more would be replaced by June.

Batamul blast

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parts of a deep-rooted conspiracy against the Bengali cultural heritage and the Liberation War.

They cultural leaders emphasised the need for a fresh, vigorous countrywide movement by people irrespective of their caste, creed and religion against the heinous acts committed by anti-liberation and communal forces.

Cultural activists on June 10 also will make a human chain in front of the High Court to protest the delay in trial of the alleged attackers at the Udichi function in Jessore.

Yasmeen murder

FROM PAGE 1

The first autopsy of Yasmeen's body was conducted by a child specialist that found no evidence of rape. Police were accused by prosecution of trying to hide evidence of the murder.

A number of feminist leaders and lawyers Sigma Huda, Alina Khan and Tania Amir were present in the court yesterday.

Choudhury, son of State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Choudhury Maya, also protested a section of another report in the series published on May 25.

In his ambiguous faxed message, Dipu denied that he had recently visited Chittagong to buy an AK-47 rifle.

He suggested that the newspaper should have verified its information. Dipu, who has already hit newspaper headlines on several occasions for his alleged involvement in murder and other terrorist activities, claimed that the vested groups in the ruling party and opposition were trying to destroy his image and that of his father as well.

Our Reply

The detective police in the port city confirmed that he had visited Chittagong to purchase the AK-47 rifle.

As regards his demand for verification of information, this correspondent made repeated attempts to contact him by his cell phone as well as the fixed phone at his Uttara house. Dipu avoided responding to the telephone calls after learning that they were from The Daily Star.

The Daily Star.

FROM PAGE 1

Some OIC states including non-Arab Turkey, which has close military ties with Israel, and several African members with diplomatic relations had voiced reservation about breaking political contacts with the Jewish state.

The communiqué urged world powers to press Israel to halt violence against Palestinians and accept various peace initiatives on the table.

It found fault with the United States over its perceived pro-Israeli bias and Israel's use of US-made weapons in eight months of fighting that has killed at least 447 Palestinians, 87 Israelis and 13 Israeli Arabs, and wounded thousands.

"(We) call on the United States to promptly intervene to stop the Israeli aggression and prevent the Israeli government from continuing to use lethal and internationally banned weapons against civilians, which has shaken the very foundations of regional security and stability and put the Middle East region on the brink of a destructive war," the resolution said.



World Bank, Dhaka office celebrated the 'Take Our Daughter's to Work Day' yesterday. Frederick T Temple distributed certificates among the participants.

Export of rare turtles

FROM PAGE 1

my field officers conducted the inspection they found the specific stocks of turtles with the business houses, and accordingly I signed the clearance document."

A top official of the Ministry of Environment and Forest told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity that the MoEF gave the go-ahead to the business houses on the basis of the reports by Department of Forest that the reptiles were produced in turtle farms in the country.

"We took the forest department report into confidence and issued the permits. In fact, we do not have much monitoring at field level," said the official.

Sources in one such business house said that the flap shelled spotted turtles enjoy a big market at food chain shops in different Asian

countries including China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Japan and Taiwan. In local market, the price of per kilogram of turtle varies from TK 120 to 140 per kilogram while export price ranges between four to five US dollars per kilogram.

"The inspector and officials of the environment ministry and the forest department all go by money to issue such permits," said a businessman requesting anonymity.

He said that when the inspector comes for inspection, he is shown a small pond. The inspector is then 'too happy' to write in his report that there are 'maybe 20,000 turtles in the stock'.

"You cannot blame the business houses. We pay for every single bit of the whole procedure," he said.

The businessman said that after obtaining the permit, they launched

procurement drive in different parts of the country. He said their network of suppliers enables them to procure the turtles from fishermen across the country. The businessman, however, admitted that turtles are becoming increasingly difficult to procure.

The IUCN's Program Officer Rashiduzzaman Ahmed said there are 22 species of fresh water and land turtles in Bangladesh. And all the species are now 'very vulnerable' because the number of turtles is alarmingly decreasing.

He said turtle farms should be encouraged in the country, as there is always a demand for turtle meat in Asian countries.

"But there is no scope for any one of us to catch wild turtles and put them on the dish," he said.

Accord with Russian firm

FROM PAGE 1

ing the negotiations, said an official.

Although the contract for the first phase of the Siddhirganj plant dictates that TPE complete the project in 36 months (or by 1998), so far only the civil works have been completed. As per the contract, the PDB paid 10 per cent down payment back in 1996 to TPE.

A PDB high official, however, claimed that progress of Siddhirganj phase 1 was satisfactory. In two years' time the project would be complete, he added.

Back in 1995, TPE proposed a budget of 84 million US dollars for the first phase plant under a supplier's credit. Surprisingly, instead of reducing the project cost through negotiations, the budget for the plant was increased to 94 million US

dollars.

While the company failed to make any progress, the PDB made another surprise move in March 1999. This time, it proposed to the government an additional budget for electrical and civil works worth 54 million US dollars. The government rejected the proposal.

Incidentally, the then chairman Nuruddin Kamal was removed from the PDB within a couple of weeks after this development. His successor Qamrul Islam Siddique took up the issue and divided the US\$54 million budget as per the type of work.

Soon the government approved an additional budget of 26 million US dollars for electrical works for the project. The former chairman also succeeded in getting approval

for another additional budget for civil works.

TPE, meanwhile, continued to delay implementation of the project on one pretext or the other. At the same time, it submitted a proposal for the second phase of the plant under supplier's credit. Sources said, this proposal was very similar to the one made for the first phase.

Continuous power crisis in the country also prompted Energomash, another Russian company, to land a proposal of the second phase of Siddhirganj power plant. Energomash proposed that the plant would have 225 MW capacity and would be built on a turnkey basis. This offer, however, did not see the light of day.

Khaleda

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proposal of cooperation with the Japanese government in removing acute traffic jam in cities particularly in Dhaka.

The ambassador said he would place the proposals to his government and looks forward to a positive response.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Morshed Khan were present.

Gulf War victims

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whose compensation payments have so long remained suspended, the release added.

Meanwhile, a four member high-powered UNCC delegation led by Cecil Eie, Director UNCC, yesterday called on Labour and Employment Minister MA Mannan and held a discussion on compensation of Bangladesh nationals affected by Iraq-Kuwait War.

OIC: Political contacts with Israel

FROM PAGE 1

Some OIC states including non-Arab Turkey, which has close military ties with Israel, and several African members with diplomatic relations had voiced reservation about breaking political contacts with the Jewish state.

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The statement echoed Arafat's earlier condemnation of Israel's use of US made F-16 fighter jets, ground-attack Apache helicopters and main battle tanks as well as "the use of depleted uranium bullets and poison gas..."

Israel has denied using uranium bullets and poison gas.

The move was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority.

"It is a message to the isolation of Israel," Nabil Shaath, Palestinian minister for international cooperation, told reporters, expressing his hope that all the conference's decisions and recommendations would be implemented.

Conference host Qatar dismissed calls for cuts in oil supplies to countries backing Israel to force them to meet Muslim and Arab conditions for ending the Middle East conflict.

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem bin Jaber al-Thani told a news conference an oil boycott like that imposed during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war was not an option now.

But the OIC resolution called for

an international criminal tribunal to try Israeli officials "as war criminals" responsible for "heinous massacres" and human rights violations.

It asked the United Nations to make Israel pay "reparations for moral and material losses" suffered by Palestinians.

A call for a break in ties with Israel at the ninth OIC summit, held in Doha last November, went unheeded by some members, including Mauritania and Turkey, which maintained full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

And even Qatar, the current OIC president, has come under fire for its links with Israel.

Under the pressure of a boycott by key participants because of the presence of an Israeli trade office in Doha, Qatari authorities announced its closure on the eve of November's summit. But it emerged that the office was still staffed.

Several countries, including Egypt and some of the Gulf states, notably Saudi Arabia, kept their foreign ministers away from Saturday's meeting to protest at the fact it was still operating.

One to die for killing uncle in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Habiganj

One person was awarded death sentence by the District and Sessions Judge's Court Habiganj yesterday on charge of killing his uncle.

The convict was identified as Shaista Mia of village Alowa under Bahubal thana of Habiganj district.

According to prosecution, Shaista Mia stabbed his uncle Bajid Mia, 70, to death on October 15 in 1997 over previous enmity.

The victim's wife filed a case with Bahubal police in this connection.

Police after investigation submitted a chargesheet against Shaista Mia.

The judge Abdur Rashid Mia after examining 10 prosecution witnesses and found the accused guilty of murdering his uncle and awarded him death sentence.

The judge also passed order to execute verdict by hanging.

Public prosecutor Fazley Ali appeared for state while Advocate Habibur Rahman for the accused.

Case under PSA Hearing on charge framing against Mufti Amini, 35 others June 24

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Second Tribunal for Prevention of Public Safety Disturbance and Crime, Dhaka yesterday fixed June 24 for hearing on charge framing in a case against Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini and 35 others under Public Safety Act (PSA).

Judge Mohammad Abdur Razzak adjourned the hearing after taking custody warrant of 28 out 36 accused in the case.

Mufti Amini, convener of the Committee for Implementation of Islamic Law led a procession on February 2 near the GPO crossing to protest the High Court Judge's verdict on 'fatwa'. They allegedly pelted bricks, ransacked doors, windows, glasses of GPO and created panic in the area.

Ramna thana SI Shariful Islam filed a case against 5000 unidentified people under Public Safety Act (PSA) with Motijheel thana the same day.

IO Mohammad Haider Ali submitted a charge-sheet against 36 people including Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini on April 14 showing 22 people as prosecution witnesses.

Amini, his son and 41 others were arrested from different places in the city on February 3.

Special PP Mohammad Abdullah Abu appeared for the state while Advocate Rezaul Karim for the accused.

Twenty-eight of the 36 accused including Amini were produced before the court during the hearing.

Dhakeswari Mandir to observe Zia's death anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

For the first time the death anniversary of president Ziaur Rahman will be observed at Dhakeswari Mandir in the city on June 6.

The daylong programme will begin with recitation from the Geeta.

Other programmes include discussion and feeding the destitutes, a BNP leader, Suranjan Ghosh, told UNB last night.

Khaleda Zia will attend the programme in the afternoon.

Juba Dal general secretary Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Suranjan Ghosh and Kartick Chandra got the schedule confirmed at a meeting with the leader of the opposition at her 29 Minto Road official residence yesterday.

Rly nightguard murdered in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

One railway nightguard posted at Azim Nagar station was strangled by some unidentified miscreants near the station on Saturday night.

The dead was identified as Abdus Sattar, 45, of Champia village under Lalpur upazila of Natore district.

Police quoting local people said a group of unidentified people stabbed Sattar indiscriminately and strangled. They left the body in a paddy field.

Police said the guard might have been killed by thieves of railway sleepers and stones.

A case was filed with Lalpur thana in this connection.

Alleged mugger shot, arrested by police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police shot and arrested an alleged mugger when he tried to flee after mugging a pedestrian in the city yesterday morning.

Police said a gang of three snatched Tk 1000 from one Maksudur Rahman in front of Victoria Park in Sutrapur thana at about 11:30 a.m.

When Maksudur cried for help, the on-duty Police Officer of Sutrapur thana Moniruzzaman rushed to the spot and shot at the muggers. Bullet hit one of them.

Police arrested the wounded mugger and the money snatched was recovered from his possession.

Later, the wounded was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

A case was filed with Sutrapur police station.

Fresh voter list

FROM PAGE 1

reach some districts due to 'unavoidable circumstances', an EC official said. "We will send it within a day or two."

Voters concerned or aggrieved persons would now be able to bring to the notice of EC any incorrect information in the voter list for correction. Necessary papers and forms for this are now available at the offices concerned, official sources said.

In view of controversy over enrolment of voters, the EC has taken up such a measure for the first time to ensure accuracy of the list, one source noted.

The number of voters this time stood at 7,48,23855, nearly 1.5 crore more than in the previous list. Various quarters termed the increase 'abnormal'.

"The EC would conduct investigations, if necessary, and take action against those found involved

in malpractice regarding the voter list," an EC official told this correspondent yesterday.

The EC at a meeting today would review the latest position as regards voter list, listing of new polling centers and other related issues.

Later, the Chief Election Commissioner and top EC officials are also likely to visit some of the places where the voter list is being displayed.

Musharraf

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Kashmiri people," Sattar said. "Today the issue of Kashmir is not a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan."

Pakistan wants implementation of the UN resolutions that call for a vote in Kashmir on whether to join Pakistan or India. But India refuses, calling Kashmir its integral part.