

SQUABBLES OVER SUCCESSOR TO MUSHARRAF, SACKED JUDGES Pak ruling coalition on verge of collapse

AP, Islamabad

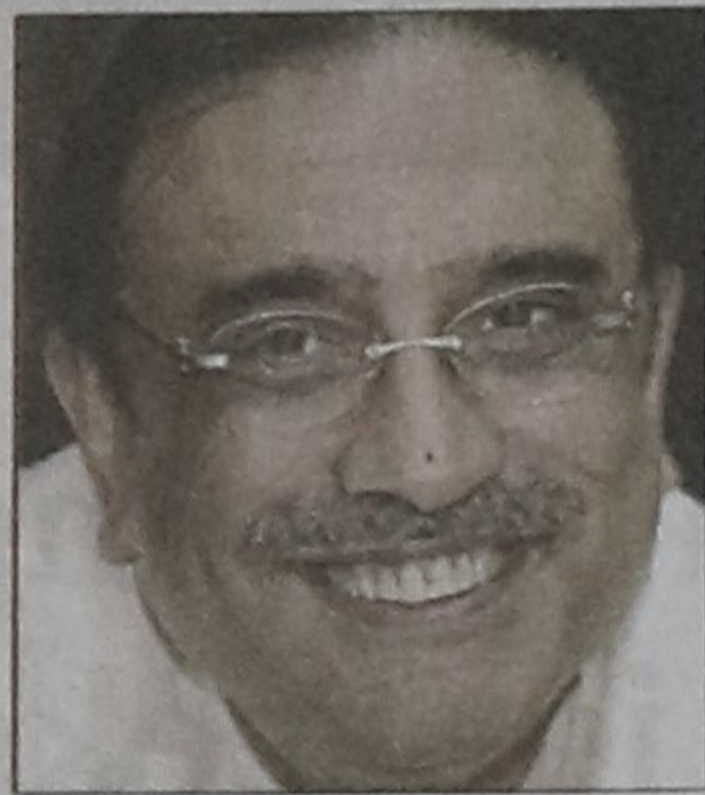
Pakistan's ruling coalition teetered on the brink of collapse as the two main partners squabbled over a successor to ousted president Pervez Musharraf.

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who heads the junior partner in the coalition, demanded the dominant Pakistan People's Party slash the president's powers before he would support its candidate.

Asif Ali Zardari, head of the PPP and widower of the party's assassinated leader Benazir Bhutto, agreed Saturday to run for the



Nawaz Sharif



Asif Ali Zardari

presidency.

Sharif also pushed forward the deadline for restoration of dozens of judges sacked by Musharraf another key issue dividing the two main parties since they forced the president from power less than a week ago.

Still pressure was building for the two sides to end differences that appeared increasingly irreconcilable.

A Sharif aide, Pervez Rasheed, told The Associated Press on Sunday that "general opinion" in his party favoured an exit from the

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BGFCL wants its gas sales tariff doubled

SHARIEF KHAN

The country's biggest natural gas provider Bangladesh Gas Field Company Ltd (BGFL) is asking the government to increase its gas sales tariff to Tk 14 per thousand cubic feet (mcf) from the miserly rate of Tk 7 for the last 17 years.

While the BGFL is investing huge money to increase gas production by 270 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) in the next four years to reduce energy crisis in the country, the company is losing money through gas sales due to the low tariff.

For the last five years, the BGFL has been steadily contributing to the national exchequer more than Tk 1,500 crore a year as supplementary duty, Vat and debt service liability.

Ironically, the same company

has been compelled to turn to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a \$100 million loan to undertake projects to increase gas production and maintain Titas gas field. Side by side, the company is spending around Tk 500 crore from its own funds for various projects to increase gas production.

"Our breakeven cost is Tk 14 per mcf," says a top BGFL official. "If we can get just price for our gas, we don't need to borrow from donors to undertake development projects."

The Tk 7 well-head gas sales tariff was fixed in 1991. The same gas is transmitted by Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) that is paid Tk 11 per mcf. At consumer end, average sales rate is Tk 93 per mcf.

Increase of BGFL's tariff will not affect retail gas tariff at con-

sumer's end or its annual contribution to the national exchequer.

Seconding this argument, Petrobangla in May sent a proposal to the government to increase gas sales tariff of the BGFL and Bapex. The government last month raised gas tariff of Bapex from Tk 7 per mcf to Tk 25. Bapex produces a small amount of gas and made no profit from its sales. So, it needed a major price adjustment. The BGFL needs a small adjustment, sources said.

"The company now provides 700 mmcf of gas from different gas fields it owns. Of these, Titas field supplies around 400 mmcf as the main provider," said a Petrobangla source. The BGFL owns Titas, Bakhrabad, Rashidpur, Narsinghdi and Kailastila gas fields.

The gas company contributed

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2007 UNREST DU syndicate urges govt to withdraw case

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) syndicate has requested the government to consider with utmost sympathy the demand for withdrawal of the case against seven DU students in connection with torching an army vehicle.

The syndicate at a meeting on Saturday night observed that it is the responsibility of all concerned including teachers, students and the government to maintain a congenial atmosphere on the campus through mutual cooperation for the greater interest of the country.

The meeting was chaired by DU Vice-Chancellor Prof. SMA Faiz.

The case was filed with Shahbagh Police Station against 25 DU students in connection with the campus unrest last August.

Of them, seven students are still facing the charges while names of 18 were removed from the case.

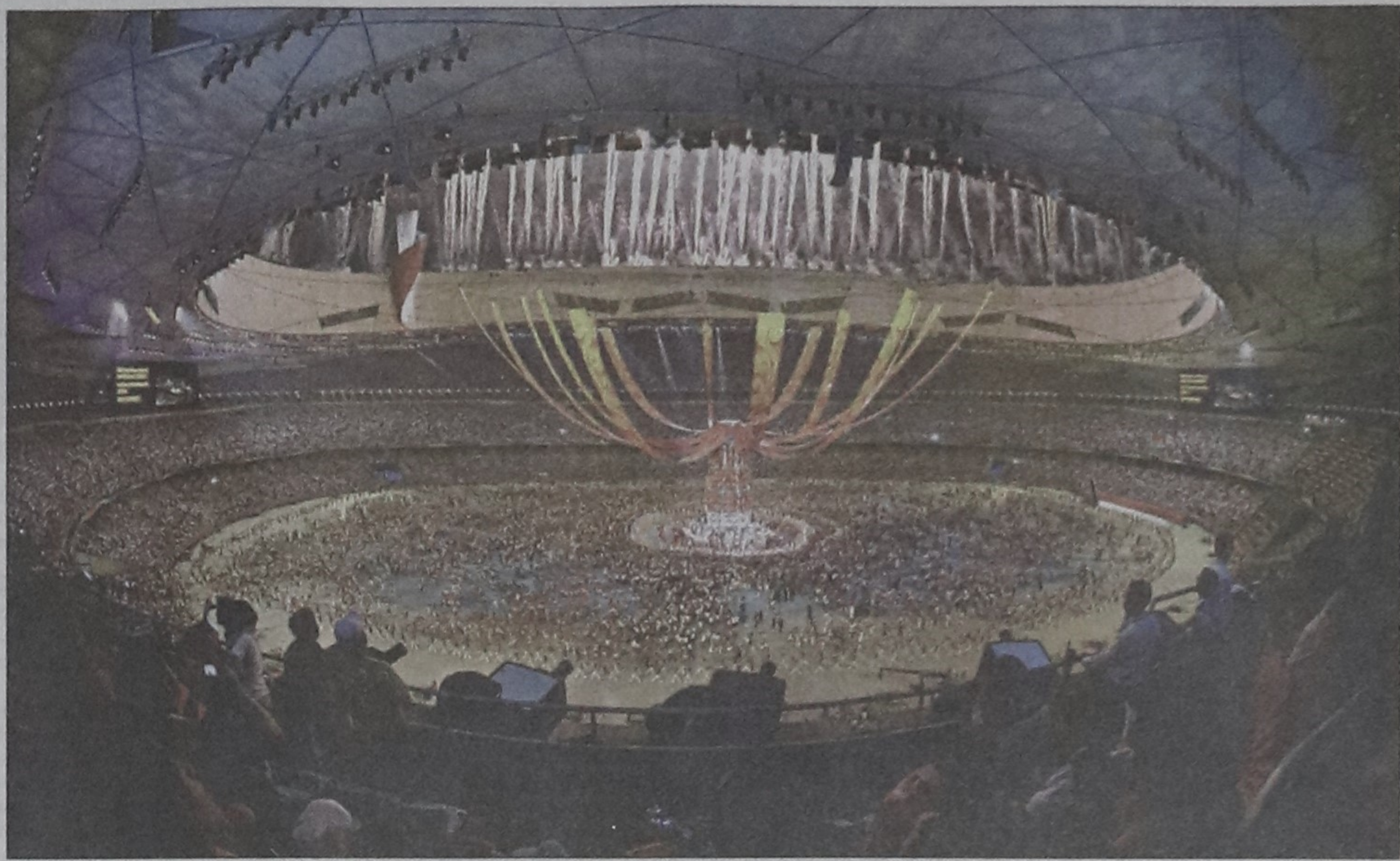
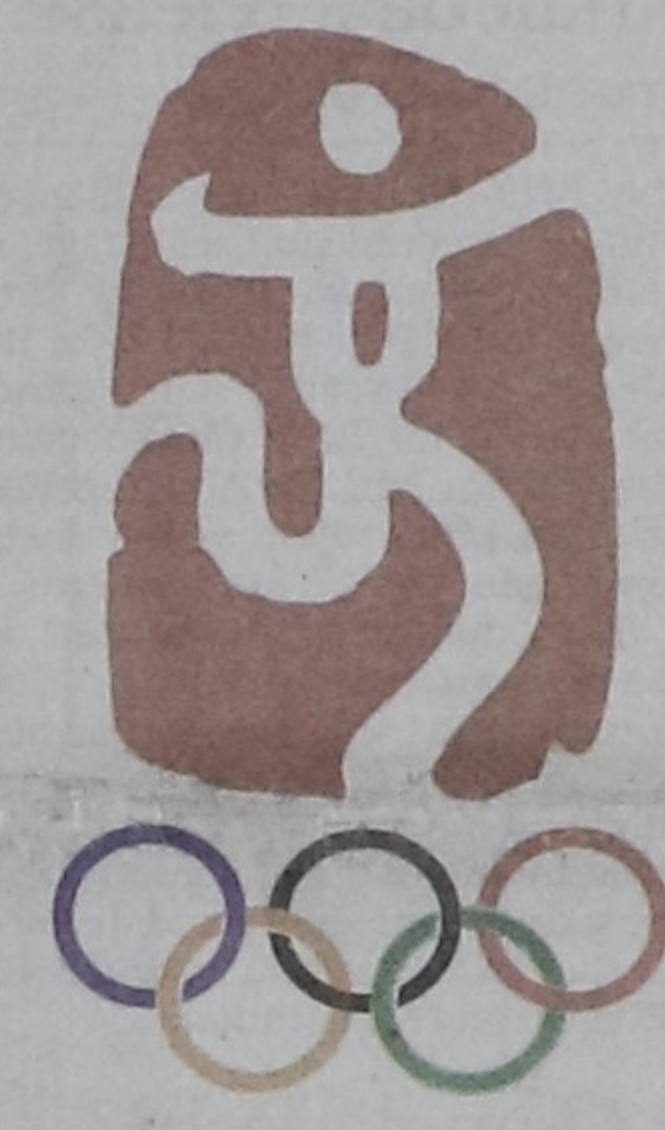


PHOTO: AFP

BIRD'S NEST GOES ALL COLOUR: The spectacular closing ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games at the National Stadium yesterday.

Curtain falls on Beijing 2008



AFP, Beijing

The Beijing Olympics, played out against a background of political intrigue and featuring 16 days of compelling and controversial action, drew to a spectacular close yesterday.

International Olympic Committee chief Jacques Rogge described the Games as "truly exceptional" in a lavish closing ceremony at the Bird's Nest National Stadium which culminated in the handing over of the Olympic flag to Boris Johnson, the mayor of London, which will host the 2012 edition.

Through these Games, the world learned more about China, and China learned more about the

world," said Rogge. "These were truly exceptional Games."

The Games saw China depose the United States as the new sports superpower but the final day started with Kenyan Samuel Wanjiru relishing the heat to record an historic first Olympic marathon for the African nation.

Final medal table on page 19

Zou Shiming won China's first ever boxing gold and his country's 50th gold of the Games when he claimed the light-flyweight title.

At the end of the 16 days of competition and 302 events, China had 51 gold medals, 15 more than the United States on 36, with Russia winning 23 and Great Britain 19. It is the first time China has won

the gold medal count, although in total medals won the United States has 110 to China's 100.

Wanjiru, striding to Kenya's first marathon success, celebrated in the hot sun as he broke the 24-year-old Games record while those around him wilted.

"I had to push the pace to tire the other runners. I had to push the pace because my body gets tired in the heat when I slow down," he said as temperatures rose towards 30 degrees.

"It feels good to make history here. It feels good to make history for Kenya and win the gold."

Kenya may have won according to the script but the principal actors were different as the out

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25 spots get waterlogged after shower in city



PHOTO: STAR

A moderate shower leaves residents of Shahjadpur of DCC ward-18 in ankle-deep water as no Wasa drainage network is there.

PART-II

HELEMUL ALAM

It takes a long time for rainwater to drain out in around 25 places in Dhaka mainly due to lack of proper drainage system and filling up of canals.

An official of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) said they have plans to set up additional drainage pipes at those places in addition to recovering the canals to improve the situation.

The places include Pallabi Bus Stop, Mirpur-10 and 13, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Rokeya Sarani, Shantinagar, Monipur, Madhyabagh, Pirebagh, Islambagh, Monipuripara, southern end of Bir Shrestha Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur, Razorbagh, Fakirapool, Motijheel, Islambagh, New Market, Mohammadpur, Goran, Sipahibagh, Meradiya, Shahjadpur Dokkhinpara and a number of spots on the south side of Mirpur Road up to Gabtoli.

The Kalyanpur Ga canal desperately needs re-excavation in order to improve drainage in Kazipara, Sheorapara, Monipur, Madhyabagh and Pirebagh, said

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Khaleda's release stuck in govt conditions

Alleges Delwar

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the process of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's release remains stuck, as the interim government has set some conditions including "endorsement of all its illegal deeds" for her release.

The other conditions include taking part in the upazila elections and the next general polls under the state of emergency, he said.

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EC scrambles to resolve its re-demarcation issue

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) is urgently trying to get out of the tight spot it finds itself in after a High Court (HC) ruling stayed for three months the effectiveness of a gazette notification on the recent redemarcation of constituencies.

The rush is prompted by the fact that the Supreme Court is set to go on vacation for a month and a half after Thursday.

Returning from vacation, the court will resume on October 12,

while the EC plans to announce the parliamentary election schedule by the end of October or early November, for holding the poll in the third week of December.

Legal experts and EC officials said the commission might face difficulties in proceeding with its plans if the issue is not resolved soon, as it will have to finish the gigantic task of preparations before the poll.

In the face of the time constraint, the EC wants to quickly resolve the issue with the court as it believes the

stay order triggered a sense of uncertainty over holding the stalled ninth parliamentary poll on schedule, the EC sources said.

"We are taking urgent measures to get the matter heard before the court's vacation begins. We will try our best to dispel the prevailing uncertainty over the poll following the stay order," Shahdeen Malik, counsel of the EC, told The Daily Star. He however did not elaborate on the measures being taken by the commission.

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AL man killed in clash with BNP activists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

An Awami League (AL) activist was killed and ten people were injured yesterday in a clash between activists of AL and BNP over a ha-du-du match at Jaduria village in Jhenidah.

The dead was identified as Ariful Islam, 15, son of Manik Biswas of the village and a student of Narikelbaria School.

The injured include the victim's father Manik, Abu Sayed, Bashir, Abdur Rahim, Asad, Humayun,

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BSF for resolving issues, says sorry for BDR deaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Forces (BSF) of India agreed to resolve all "outstanding development issues" related to border security within the next month except for issues that concern Bangladesh-India Joint River Commission.

The border security forces of the two neighbouring countries also agreed on four other issues including identifying areas of the border vulnerable to trans-border crime.

"We have identified border areas vulnerable to trans-border crime," BSF Director General (DG) Ashish Kumar Mitra said, adding that BDR and BSF will jointly patrol these areas.

BDR Director General Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed and the BSF director general revealed the outcome of the five-day conference during joint a press briefing held at the BDR headquarters at Pithkhana in city. The five-day BDR-BDF director-general-level conference kicked off on August 20.

The BSF DG apologised for the July 18, 2008 incident at a border that left two BDR personnel dead.

"It was an isolated incident... this is simply ridiculous... this aberration should not have happened, I apologise for that and we are carrying out an enquiry... we will take action against the fellows," he said.

He asked to bear in mind that these were individual aberrations and were not an organisational response.

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