

# Smuggling, trafficking in humans main reasons for border killings

Says Veena Sikri

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Illegal activities such as smuggling of goods and trafficking in humans are the main reasons behind the border killings, former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri said yesterday.

Border guards of both the countries should come together to see each incident to find out exactly what happened and why anyone was shot, she said, adding that there should be joint approach to address this issue.

Veena Sikri, now chair of Ford Foundation and professor of Bangladesh studies at the Academy for Third World Studies in New Delhi, said this at a dialogue in response to criticism of the much-talked-about border killings by the Indian BSF.

The Department of International Relations of Dhaka University organised the dialogue titled 'Bangladesh-India Relations: Post-Hasina-Manmohan Summit' at the Senate Building of the university.

Veena Sikri said terrorism, organised crimes, smuggling and trafficking in women and children badly affect both India and Bangladesh. Therefore, signing agreements on security by both the countries shows maturity of relationship.

Emphasising that trade between the two neighbours must increase, she said, "I think India should remove all names of goods from the negative list. I want totally free trade."

By allowing India, Nepal and Bhutan to use Chittagong



Former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri speaks at a dialogue at the Dhaka University Senate Building yesterday. On her right are Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof Imtiaz Ahmed and Rajet Mitter.

and Mongla ports, Bangladesh will become a regional hub for transport business, Sikri said, adding that Bangladesh can also enter the market in north-eastern India.

Prof Akmal Hussain said signing of the security agreements basically goes in favour of India, which wants Bangladesh to combat crimes.

Previous experiences show that India is conservative

about its market and water issues, he said.

Even there was no reduction in border killings by BSF after the recent summit, he added.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed said the security agreements could not favour only India. There is no reason for Bangladesh to be soft on terror.

Similar security agreements should be signed with Pakistan and Nepal, he said,

adding that India has realised that it should develop its northeastern parts economically.

Former ambassador Ashfaqur Rahman said India must simplify the visa process, allow transmission of Bangladeshi TV channels to Indian homes and have more cultural exchange programmes for mutual understanding.

Another former ambassa-

dor Muhammad Zamir said bureaucrats of both the countries should change their mindset. They should not only look into problems, he noted.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former vice chancellor Prof Moniruzzaman Mian, cultural personality Aly Zaker, journalist Sadek Khan and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Rajet Mitter also spoke.

## Sohal Taj visits home ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister for home Tanjim Ahmad Sohal Taj yesterday visited the home ministry for the first time since he returned home from the US on January 27.

Sohal Taj, who left for the US after resigning as the state minister in May last year, went to the ministry at about 12:30pm without any police protocol.

He met his successor Shamsul Haque Tuku and exchanged greetings with him and reporters during his 30-minute visit.

"I came here to discuss some problems of my parliamentary constituency," he told the media.

He, however, did not make any comments when the reporters asked him whether he would join any ministry.

Later, Tuku told reporters that Taj came to the ministry as a lawmaker with a request to provide a vehicle for Kapasia Police Station.

He also avoided answering a question whether Sohal Taj was holding any portfolio.

According to sources, Sohal Taj also wanted to meet Home Minister Sahara Khatun, but she was not in the office at that time.

## 4 RU teachers acquitted

BSS, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday acquitted four teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) of charges of inciting student protests during the state of emergency in 2007.

The teachers had been convicted of the same charges in 2007.

The acquitted teachers are Chairman of Dramatics Department Moly Kumar Bhowmik and Assistant Professors Selim Reza Newton, Dulal Chandra Biswas and Abdullah Al Mamun of Journalism and Mass Communications Department.

District and Sessions Judge AR Maswood pronounced the verdict after examining the case documents.

According to the court sources, the police filed a case under emergency power rules charging the teachers with inciting student agitation on the RU campus on August 22, 2007, following an untoward incident between Dhaka University students and army men, which triggered countrywide protest at educational institutions.

Rajshahi Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ruhul Amin convicted and sentenced them to two years' rigorous imprisonment on December 4 in the same year.

They were, however, freed from jail following a presidential pardon on December 10, 2007.



Students under the banner of Bikkhubda Chhatra Samaj protest the death of Abubakar Siddique on the campus yesterday.

## DU STUDENT'S DEATH Agitation on for sixth day

DU CORRESPONDENT

The students of Dhaka University continued their demonstrations on campus for sixth day demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for the death of Abubakar Siddique, a student of the university.

Agitating students pressed home their five-point demand including resignation of the proctor of the university, punishment to persons responsible for the death and sufficient financial aid to the family of the victim.

The students, mainly leaders and activists of left-leaning student bodies and also from the Arts Faculty did street paintings at Teacher-Student Centre intersection. They also staged two street dramas at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla and Soparjito Shawdhanata in protest against the death.

A group of activists of the student bodies also marched campus

streets wearing injury bandages on their persons while some students of Institute of Education and Research also brought out a silent procession.

Meanwhile, the anti-imperialist students at a press conference at Madhur Canteen demanded resignation of Home Minister Sahara Khatun for her "remark" on death of Abubakar. They also condemned police's obstruction while burning the effigies of home minister on Monday.

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, convener of the probe committee, formed on the death of Abubakar, said the activities of the committee were going on.

Abubakar, a third year student of Islamic History and Culture department died on February 3 after receiving severe injuries during a factional clash of Bangladesh Chhatra League at Sir AF Rahman Hall the day before.

## Non-govt primary teachers for nationalisation of jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-government primary school teachers yesterday reiterated their demand for nationalisation of their jobs and similar facilities as enjoyed by the government primary school teachers.

They were speaking at a function marking the 18th founding anniversary of Non-government Primary School Teachers' Association (NPSTA) at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB).

They placed 11-point demand including increase in the house rent up to 40 percent, medical allowance up to Tk 700 and hundred percent festival bonus as enjoyed by the govt primary school teachers.

Speaking as the chief guest at the meeting

Primary and Mass Education minister Afsarul Amin said the government is yet decide the issue of nationalising the jobs of non-government primary schools.

Necessary directions have been given so that the teachers can get their salary within the first week of a month, he said.

Afsarul said 1,500 new primary schools will be established in 1,972 villages across the country. The new primary schools will not have to pay any registration fee if they are named after freedom fighter or a village.

NPSTA Chief Adviser and Awami League lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, teachers' leader Kazi Faruk Ahmed and NPSTA President Aminul Islam Chowdhury and General Secretary Mansur Ali also spoke at the meeting.

## SANCTITY OF SHAHEED MINAR HC asks govt, DU to explain in 10 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government and the Dhaka University authorities to explain within 10 days why they should not be directed to take appropriate measures to protect the sanctity and honour of the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.

In the rule, the court also asked them to explain why they should not be directed to set up a museum on the Central Shaheed Minar premises so that the visitors can know the history of 1952 Language Movement.

An HC bench comprising of Justice Md Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed and Justice Naima Haider issued the rule upon a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

The HRPB, a human rights and environmentalist organisation, on Sunday filed the public interest writ petition seeking a direction from the HC upon the authorities to take appropriate steps to protect the sanctity and honour of the Central Shaheed Minar and to set up a museum on the Shaheed Minar premises.

The cabinet secretary, the cultural secretary, the Dhaka City Corporation mayor and the DU vice-chancellor have been made respondents to reply to the HC rule.

It was stated in the petition that the 21st February is observed every year as International Mother Language Day, and the sanctity and honour of Central Shaheed Minar are maintained for that day only.

On the other days throughout the year, the Shaheed Minar is used by the people in different

ways, and the honour and dignity of the Shaheed Minar and the memories of the language heroes are undermined, the petition said.

Advocate Manzill Murshid appeared for the petitioner.

## OBITUARY



MR. MEER MAHMUD SHAREEF ALI FORMER I. G. OF BANGLADESH POLICE AND SECRETARY, GOVT. OF BANGLADESH PASSED AWAY ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH 2010 (INNA LILLAHE WA INNA ELIHE RAJEUN). HE LEFT BEHIND HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER AND SON ALONG WITH A HOST OF FRIENDS, RELATIVES AND WELL WISHERS. ALL ARE REQUESTED TO PRAY FOR HIS DEPARTED SOUL AND ETERNAL PEACE. ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

### বিজ্ঞপ্তি

**কার্যনির্বাহী পরিষদ নির্বাচন ২০১০-২০১১**

রিহাব কার্যনির্বাহী পরিষদ নির্বাচন ২০১০-২০১১, আগামী ২৭ মার্চ ২০১০ ইং তারিখ শনিবার যথা সময়ে ঢাকা শেরাটন হোটেল-এর বলরুমে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। এ লক্ষ্যে নির্বাচনী বোর্ড, রিহাব সচিবালয় থেকে আগামী ১৩ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০১০ ইং তারিখ শনিবার হতে ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০১০ ইং তারিখ বৃহস্পতিবার দুপুর ২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত মনোনয়ন পত্র যথারীতি বন্টন করা হবে। মনোনয়ন পত্র জমা দেয়ার শেষ সময় ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারী ২০১০ ইং তারিখ বৃহস্পতিবার সন্ধ্যা ৬:০০ টা। উক্ত বিষয়ে রিহাব নির্বাচন কমিশনকে সূষ্ঠ নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠানের লক্ষ্যে সার্বিকভাবে সহযোগিতা প্রদানের জন্য সম্মানিত ভোটারবৃন্দকে বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

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