

BORDER SITUATION

Odhikar places 17-pt demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Activists of human rights organisation Odhikar have urged the government to take steps to put an end to the atrocities by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in different border areas.

At a press conference organised by the district unit of Odhikar at Dinajpur Press Club in the morning, the rights activists expressed their concern over BSF's recent acts of excesses, especially hurling explosives and using sharp weapons.

They urged the government to meet 17-point demand including steps to stop attack by BSF using explosive including grenade and cocktail, identify the smugglers living in the border areas, introduce woman members in Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), get pending post modern reports of the Bangladeshis killed by BSF, realise compensation and rehabilitation fund for the families of victims of torture by BSF from the Indian government and erase the name of Pakistan from the pillars along the border.

They also demanded that the government take initiative to create job opportunities for bordering people and improve their lifestyle, carry out investigation if any unwanted incident occurs in border areas, identify the missing people, stop harassment to torture victims and families of killed people in the border areas and include local representatives at the flag meetings between BSF and BGB.

"If the BSF finds any Bangladesh intruder in their territory, they can arrange their trial, but acts of killing or torture are violation of international law," Kongkon Karmaker, Dinajpur district coordinator of Odhikar, said as he read out the keynote at the press conference.

The BSF killed at least 71 Bangladeshi nationals, mostly cattle traders, along about 400km border area under Dinajpur Sector since 2007, speakers said at the conference.

The right activists urged the government to take a diplomatic step between the two neighbouring countries to resolve the issue of cattle trading through the border areas to reduce violence there.

They also urged the government to take steps to minimise communication gap between bordering people and BGB members.

Criticising BGB for detaining 26 cattle of different people living at Katla border about a month ago despite clearance of local camp commander, the speakers said a memorandum regarding the issue will be submitted to the home minister today through the deputy commissioner of Dinajpur.

Md Moinuddin, who is suffering from infection in different parts of his body following torture by BSF about eight months ago, and Md Mominul Islam, another victim of torture by BSF and family members of several people killed by BSF were also present at the press conference.

Speakers demanded that the government bear the cost of Moinuddin's treatment.

On March 5 this year, BSF tortured five Bangladeshi nationals at Bhaighar border under Birampur upazila of Dinajpur. Of them Golap Hossain died at a private hospital in Rangpur while Jalil Hossain was detained by BSF.

Before his death, Golap Hossain told locals that Jalil had died due to torture by BSF. But two months into the incident, Jalil's family members are yet to know about his condition.

A power point presentation with photographs on 'Lifestyle of Border People' was shown at the press conference.



Farmers harvest unripe boro paddy from submerged Chatalpur Haor in Mithamoin upazila of Kishoreganj district.

PHOTO: STAR

Boro on 10,000 hectares goes under water in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kishoreganj

Boro paddy on around 10,000 hectares of land in the low-lying and haor (large marshy land) areas of Itna and Mithamoin upazilas has gone under water due to recent downpour and collapse of embankments.

A flood control embankment at Sankir beel (waterbody) collapsed seven days ago, inundating boro crop on around 4,000 hectares of land in Mithamoin and Itna upazilas.

Another embankment named Bijoy Bandh at Joisiddi union in Itna upazila collapsed five days ago due to heavy rain and onrush of water from hills across the border. Boro on

around 2,000 hectares of land in the area has gone under water in the upazila.

An embankment of Bashira River in Mithamoin upazila collapsed 10 days ago, submerging around 4,000 hectares of boro cropland in the low-lying areas of the upazila.

During the period, Meghna, Kalni, Kushiya, Dhanu, Daira, Haturia, and Gorautra rivers overflowed their banks and flooded Joisiddi, Wara, Kamalpur, Charigram, Kolakani, Katkhal, Boirai, Madirgaon, Hashimpur, Phulpur, Gabindapur, Dhaki, Keuta, Karanshi, Haatboigga, Bhaittarchar, Chatal, Kakua, Atpasa, Mamudpur, Jadabpur and Dalargaon haors in the two upazilas

Boro paddy is getting damaged as water entered the haors and the low-lying areas, overflowing the river banks and through the breaches of the embankments has remained stagnant for 10 days.

While visiting the haor areas in Mithamoin upazila on Friday, this correspondent saw the farmers cutting unripe boro on the submerged land and loading them onto boats.

They urged the authorities concerned, especially the Water Development Board (WDB), to repair the damaged embankment as soon as possible.

Khushi Mohan, executive engineer of Water

Development Board (WDB) in Kishoreganj, said the water level in the rivers marked a sharp rise following downpour in the upstream and the dykes collapsed under heavy pressure of water.

"We are taking necessary steps to remove the stagnant water and repair the embankment," the engineer said.

Storm-hit people block road demanding relief

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

Hundreds of nor'wester hit people blocked road on Pirganj-Boirchuna-Dinajpur road at Boirchuna village under Pirganj upazila for three hours on Saturday, demanding adequate relief.

Scores of families lost almost everything including their dwelling houses and

crops in the village but only a few of them got 10kg of rice each so far.

Chairman of Boirchuna union parishad told this correspondent over cell phone that about 2,100 families were affected during Tuesday's storm.

Only six tonnes of rice were allocated and those were given away among 600 families in two wards of his union. Each family get 10kg of rice, he said.

At least five people were killed and over 50 injured as a violent storm lashed 25 villages in Pirganj upazila of the district at around 8:00pm.

During the violent storm, several hundreds of houses were badly damaged.

The worst affected unions are Boirchuna, Jabarhat and Hazipur.

The protesters later with-

Two 'drug peddlers' killed

UNB, Keraniganj

Two people were beaten to death by their rivals following a dispute over drug peddling in Kaliganj and Zianagar areas here early yesterday.

Witnesses said a local criminal group led by notorious Mirza beat and stabbed a young man named Badal, aged about 35, to death over drug related disputes at about 4am in Kaliganj.

Later, the same group beat up Zakir, 25, of nearby Zianagar area to death following the quarrel over drug peddling at about 5am and hanged his body from a tree in a bid to prove that he committed suicide.

On information, police recovered the bodies that bore marks of injuries.

Police said the victims were members of the drug peddling group.

CID official sued on charge of demanding bribe

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtia

An officer of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Kushtia has been sued on charge of demanding bribe as condition for continuing investigation in a murder case.

Khairul Islam of Takimara village in Kushtia Sadar upazila on Thursday filed the case with the court of Judicial Magistrate Touhidul Islam who ordered another Judicial Magistrate Sanaul Haq to conduct an inquiry into the matter and submit report within a week.

Complainant of the case, Khairul Islam of Takimara village said a group of criminals killed his father Rahat Ali over a village feud on March 23 last year and he filed a murder case accusing 21 people including former chairman of Bottail union parishad Sahin Salauddin as prime accused.

The case was later transferred to CID from Kushtia model police station.

"CID Sub-Inspector Akidul Islam, also investigation officer (IO) of the case, called the plaintiff side to give their deposition at his office and all 13 witnesses went to the CID office on March 13," Khairul said in his case filed with the judicial magistrate's court on Thursday.

"At one stage of recording

deposition, IO Akidul demanded Tk 2 lakh as bribe from me to continue investigation in the case. He also said that otherwise the case will be dismissed.

"I asked IO Akidul to go to my village home to discuss the matter with my family members. When the CID officer went there on March 15, we offered him Tk 50,000 but he declined to accept it and demanded 'full amount' of Tk 2 lakh," Khairul alleged in his case.

"Then we expressed our inability to give the money to the CID officer. Detective Branch (DB) of police of Kushtia on April 20 arrested Akmol Hossain, younger brother of Mokammel Hossain, one of the witnesses in the murder case. The CID officer phoned me and said that this arrest would not have happened if I had given him the money. He also threatened me of more such arrests until the payment," Khairul said in his case.

When contacted, Judicial Magistrate Sanaul Haq said investigation in the case is going on.

As this correspondent contacted CID Sub-Inspector Akidul Islam for his version, he said he would not make any comment as the matter is now under judicial inquiry.



A customer sees litchi from a vendor at Shaheb Bazar in Rajshahi city. With the season's first arrival in the market, the juicy summer fruit is selling for Tk 220 to Tk 250 per hundred.

PHOTO: STAR

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