

BORDER CONFERENCE ENDS BGB, BSF agree to maintain peace

UNB, Dhaka

A border conference between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) concluded in India on Thursday, calling to maintain peace along the borders.

Held at Shiliguri in India, the four-day border conference discussed different border-related problems between the two countries in a cordial and amicable atmosphere, says a PID handout.

BGB Deputy Director General Brigadier General Abu Sayeed Khan led a 14-member Bangladesh delegation to the conference.

The delegation included BGB sector commanders of Dinajpur, Khulna, Rangpur, Kushtia and Rajshahi, staff officers of BGB headquarters and officials of home and foreign ministries.

The Indian delegation included BSF inspector generals of South Bengal, Malda and North Bengal frontiers, officials of

Home Ministry and Narcotics Control Bureau.

The BGB delegation raised Bangladesh's concern over the indiscriminate shooting, killing and injuring of unarmed Bangladeshis along the borders, calling upon BSF to take effective steps to check recurrence of such incidents.

BSF was urged not to create panic along the border areas by throwing and blasting explosives.

They were also requested to stop the arrest and detention of Bangladeshi nationals by Indian nationals and not to start any construction work within 150 yards of the border.

The BSF delegation assured to exercise utmost restraint and take necessary and cautious measures to check recurrence of any untoward incident.

Both sides agreed to take effective steps to check smuggling and human trafficking in the future and initiatives to strengthen cooperation, mutual trust and amity.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS
Farmers picking fresh tomatoes from the farmlands of Patenga in Chittagong. Inset, tomatoes ready to be taken to the market for sale. Farmers have turned to tomato cultivation on some 250 hectares of land in the area, once famous for their succulent watermelons. The photos were clicked recently.

One murdered in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decomposed body of an unidentified man was found stuffed in a sack at Mirpur in the capital yesterday evening.

On information, police recovered the body at around 6:30pm from an empty plot at Dakkhin Monipur.

The body of the man, aged around 35 years, wearing jeans pant and shirt, was found coiling his throat with electric wire.

He might be killed a few days ago, said police.

Abu Bakar Siddique, sub-inspector of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that criminals might kill him somewhere else and, stuff in the sack and dumped in the area.

Elderly man shot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 65-year-old man was shot by three allegedly local extortionists, one of whom, Swapan, was arrested with a revolver and six bullets while fleeing the spot at SK Das Lane in the capital's Gandaria last evening.

Two bullets hit Md Babul Miah, one entering his left thigh and the other his bottom. He is now being treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Minor boy 'killed'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-year-old boy was killed allegedly by his neighbours at Bhatara in the capital yesterday.

The deceased was Mohammad Jisan, son of labourer Helal Uddin of the city's Solmait.

Locals found his body in a local ditch around 8:00am.

Jisan's mother Jesmin Begum said her son was playing in front of their house around 2:00pm on Thursday, ever since which he has been missing.

She alleged that a couple, living next door to her, killed her son. She had a feud with them last Tuesday and they threatened to take revenge, she said.

Police picked up the couple, Dristi Begum and Osman Gani, for questioning, but the duo denied their involvement.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said the kid was drowned.

Tomato occupiees Patenga after watermelon goes

MINHAJ UDDIN, Ctg

The famous mouth-watering dark-green variety of watermelon of Patenga has become totally extinct and is replaced by tomato cultivation in a vast area.

Watermelon cultivation in coastal Patenga was badly hurt by the 1991 cyclone. Before that disaster, farmers of the area used to grow around 3,750 tonnes of watermelons a year in 250 hectares of land with 15 to 16 tonnes of yield per hectare.

Ever since the cyclone, farmers and local agricultural scientists have tried several times to revive farming of that large, sweet watermelon.

This year, local agri-scientists said they have more or less given up the hope. Instead farmers of Patenga turned to tomato farming.

Metropolitan Agriculture Officer Nasir Uddin said Patenga watermelons were unique as that variety used to grow only in this region.

Explaining the reason behind the extinction of the variety, he said the 1991 cyclone brought in tidal waves onto the melon fields and increased soil salinity. The original seed of that variety kept with the farmers gradually got lost within the next few years.

Later on, the agri-scientists brought in high quality watermelon seeds from Japan, Nasir said, adding that they tried to bring back the watermelon glory even last year but in vain.

"That means, whatever you might have bought in the name of Patenga watermelons in recent years is all fake," said a Patenga farmer Abdus Salam with a smile.

"Even last year I found many traders in Sylhet selling watermelons branding those as Patenga's," said Salam, a former melon grower, who now finds hope in tomato.

Local cultivators and agriculture officials said this year in approximately 250

hectares of land in Chowdhurypara, Maizpara, Nazirpara, Fulcharipara, Charpara, Bijoynogor, and East Katgor of Patenga tomato has been grown.

The farmers expect to produce more than 650 tonnes of tomato this season.

Meeting the local demand, tomatoes are supplied to different parts of Chittagong city and beyond, said a tomato wholesaler Mohammad Faruk.

Mohammed Nasir, another tomato cultivator of Nazirpara, shared his story about how the farmers switched to tomato cultivation. "In 1995, a few farmers started growing tomato on a small scale. Their success made others to follow the lead."

On an average, farmers spend around Tk 75,000 per hectare of land and earn double the amount by selling tomatoes. But it is not always an easy profit.

A farmer of Chowdhurypara, Abul Hashem, said growers are often compelled to sell their produces at low prices in roadside bazars because of a lack of a market that absorbs huge amount of tomatoes.

In addition, there has been an increased rate of diseases infecting tomato plants in recent years, which is raising production cost due to additional spending on pesticides.

Agriculture Officer Nasir said wilting and leaf curling are two major diseases that have increased over the years due to repeated tomato cultivation in the same land.

"We are advising farmers to adopt 'Crop Rotation' method that discourages growing a vegetable in succession".

The farmers can grow any other vegetable in between the two periods of tomato cultivation to prevent the diseases that spread mainly for repeated cultivation of the same crop.

Tomato production may go down in the coming years if crop rotation method is not adopted, Nasir cautioned.



PHOTO: STAR
Only a small number of workers, appointed by Dhaka Wasa, work to install sewage pipes on Begum Rokeya Sarani in the capital, lengthening the duration of work and causing suffering to passers-by. The photo was taken yesterday.

BIBHAS' DEATH Driver gives deposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The driver of the bus, which ran over journalist Bibhas Chandra Saha on May 11, gave his statement about the accident to a Dhaka court yesterday.

Mofizul Islam said that before the accident, he saw a motorbike on the left and a private car on the right of his bus in the mirrors. "My assistant instructed me to turn left, and as soon as I did that I heard a sound of a crash".

In a while the passengers and pedestrians were shouting the motorcyclist was killed, Mofizul Islam said, adding that he instantly stopped the bus and left the scene.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mahmud Aziz recorded the statement of Mofizul Islam. If found guilty, he may face up to three years' imprisonment, Masudur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of police, told The Daily Star.

The statement says Mofizul collected his driving licence from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in 2005. Since then he had been driving trucks until he started off with bus last year. Mofizul cannot read or write.

Nine die in road accidents

METRO DESK

Nine people, including a Myanmar citizen, were killed and nine others injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka, Chittagong, Narsingdi, Rajbari, Habiganj and Brahmanbaria yesterday.

Staff correspondent reports: Two people died after a bus hit their motorbike in Mirpur-Beribandh area in the capital yesterday.

The deceased, Alam Khan, 50, was a petrol pump worker while Kawsar Ahmed Khan, 51, a trader.

A Mohammadpur-bound bus of Alif Paribahan rammmed the bike at Birulia at about 1:30pm, killing Alam instantly, said Rupnagar police.

Alam's relative Kawsar was pronounced dead on the way to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (Nitor).

Staff correspondent from Chittagong reports: A Myanmar citizen (Rohinga) was killed and four others were injured as a Cox's Bazar-bound bus rammmed a Nasiman (three-wheeler) in front of Primary Training Institute (PTI) at Patiya upazila at around 10:00am yesterday.

The deceased, Md Rafiq, 30, was the Nasiman driver, said police.

The injured, Abu Bakar, 35, Abdus Sabur, 30, Delwar Hosain, 40, and Mortuza Begum, 30, also the Myanmar citizens were undergoing treatment at Patiya Upazila Health Complex.

Our Narsingdi correspondent says: Two farmers were killed and three others injured when a truck rammmed a rickshaw in Chaitanya

busstand area in Shibpur upazila yesterday.

The victims were Mister Mia, 25, and Bashir Ahmed, 18, of Lalkhartek village in the same upazila.

Injured Khaja Uddin, 35, Mozammel, 19, and Manik Mia, 35, were rushed to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital.

Our Manikganj correspondent reports: Mohammad Chandu, 40, supervisor of a bus, was killed as a truck ran over him in Daulatdia signboard area of Goalandu upazila in Rajbari early hours of yesterday.

UNB from Goalandu says: Dilip Kumar Das, 50, died as an unknown vehicle hit him near Paturia yesterday.

In Habiganj, a Grameen Bank official was killed as a tractor hit a Habiganj-bound CNG-run auto-rickshaw from Shayestaganj carrying him at Bhanganapool on the outskirts of the town yesterday.

The deceased, Farooq Mia, was an assistant manager of the bank's Kishoreganj district branch.

He was taken to Habiganj Sadar Modern Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Our Brahmanbaria correspondent says: Suhrah Hossain, 30, was killed and his two friends were injured as a truck knocked their motorbike from the opposite direction on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Budunti bus stand area of Bijoynagar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The injured, Bimon Mitro and Mahedi Hasan Mithu, were admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.



PHOTO: STAR
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal brings out a procession carrying black flags in the capital's Shahbagh yesterday demanding the masses and political parties to cut all ties with war criminals of the 1971 Liberation War.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation will organise a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity; Time: 10:00am.

View exchange meeting
Sector Commanders Forum, Liberation War-71 will hold a view exchange meeting; Venue: Shaheed Munir Chowdhury auditorium, Dhaka University; Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion
Sangbhidhanik Adhikar Forum will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

Human chain
Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad will hold a human chain; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

Human chain
Imarat Nirman Sramik Union Bangladesh will hold a human chain; Venue: before Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs will organise a discussion; Venue: Bilia auditorium; Time: 10:00am.

Launching
International Centre for Nazrul will hold its launching; Venue: Radius