

## Extrajudicial killings

FROM PAGE 1  
however, rejected the report terming it "baseless and motivated".

But civil society members support the US government report that said police, Border Guard Bangladesh and Rab at times used "unwarranted lethal force".

Contacted by The Daily Star, former police chief ASM Shahjahan Khan said, "If any extrajudicial killing takes place, it goes against the rule of law."

An agency becomes morally weak when it faces criticisms from all quarters. So any allegation against any force should be probed and those guilty should be tried, said Shahjahan, also former adviser to a caretaker government.

In many cases the guilty personnel are not punished and there are many reasons behind it, he added.

He also advocated forming commissions within the forces to check the current culture of impunity.

No government uses the police force for public interest; it is used by the successive governments to serve their own interest, said Shahjahan, adding: "We didn't want police for the government but for the state."

Advocate Sultana Kamal, executive director of rights body

Ain O Salish Kendra, said the US Human Rights Report 2011 is an echo of what the ASK and other local rights bodies have been saying.

"In most cases, kidnappers in guise of Rab members are picking up people but the government fails to prove that the elite force is not involved with such incidents by arresting the 'real' kidnappers," she said.

It is government's responsibility to find any missing citizen, she added.

Contacted, State Minister for Home Tuku told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday, "One or two incidents [of human rights violation] took place, but we conducted probe into those incidents to ensure accountability of the law enforcement."

Earlier on Thursday, the junior minister rejected the report of Amnesty International, a London-based global rights body, which said extrajudicial killings in Bangladesh continued throughout 2011.

"An increasingly politicised judiciary exacerbated problems in an already overwhelmed judicial system and constrained access to justice for members of opposition parties," said the US government report revealed by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington on Thursday.

## Killings by BSF

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh and India's celebrations of the 113th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and mark the 90th anniversary of the publication of "Bidrohi".

Responding to a reporter's query, the Indian minister said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had been trying his best so that nothing like the border killings took place. "I hope the home ministry is working to make things better."

According to rights body, Odhikar, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed 31 Bangladeshi nationals last year and 74 in 2010. The latest one was on May 16 when BSF killed Darul Islam, 38, of Shibganj in Chapainawabganj as he was inspecting his corn field.

Bangladesh on Monday lodged a protest against the BSF killing and called for a probe by India. In its Monday statement, Bangladesh foreign ministry also spoke during the press conference.

reminded India its pledge to stop the killings.

About the much-talked-about Teesta deal, Salman Khurshid said, "Don't worry about it... We are committed, and I can reassure you of the deal."

Not only Teesta, there are other issues as well like trade. "All tariff and non-tariff barriers are gone, and it was not easy," he said.

Asked if signing of the Teesta deal was possible during this UPA coalition government's tenure in India, Khurshid said it did not matter which government was in power. India's international relation was not dictated by any party but the country as a whole, he said.

On the ratification of Land Boundary Agreement, he said it required amendments to the constitution and that Indian home and foreign ministries were doing background work. After it passed the law ministry's vetting, it would be

placed in the parliament, he said without mentioning any timeframe.

Khurshid said visits by the prime ministers of Bangladesh and India had taken the relations between the neighbouring nations to a new height.

On the joint celebrations of Nazrul Islam's birth anniversary and 90th anniversary of the publication of "Bidrohi", he said it was a great occasion for them.

The two countries share a common history, heritage and culture, and that it was imperative that the cooperation and collaboration of the two nations was enhanced to raise the living standards of the people, providing them with jobs and education, he observed.

Indian lawmakers CM Chhola, Mohammad Adeeb, Bhola Singh and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pankaj Saran also spoke during the press conference.

## MLM firm swindles

FROM PAGE 20

chairs and tables from there.

Jamiur, also a local madrasa teacher, offered people attractive income by clicking on online advertisements sitting at their homes.

He provided a money receipt and a password to each customer to log on to the company website and start earning.

Sultan Ahmed, a customer at Vadai village, said Jamiur enticed him to join the company a month ago offering hefty profit. He bought five centres for Tk 56,000.

Each of the centres carries a point and costs a client Tk 11,200.

"The company has closed its operations overnight without paying a single penny as profit," he added.

Another client Shariful

Islam said, "Two months ago I joined the firm buying ten centres at Tk 1,12,000 as Jamiur assured me that the company would not cheat."

Ashraful Islam of Mohiskhocha village paid Jamiur Tk 89,600 for eight centres. "I didn't get any profit, but the company is closed now. I have no idea what to do to get my money back."

The agent has made a pile of money since starting the company's operations in Aditmari upazila, complained another client Yasin Ali adding, he (Jamiur) has bought a motorcycle and 10 bigha land here.

Contacted, Jamiur denied the allegations made against him, saying he himself has been cheated by the company.

The total cash collected from the customers has

been deposited in the company's account, he claimed.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sharif Mahmud, chief executive officer of the company, said Jamiur didn't contact him for last two weeks.

"We have received only a partial amount of the money deposited to him [Jamiur] by our clients, but he has pocketed the maximum amount," he complained.

The management of click2earn2you.com has suspended its operations for some days due to some problems, mentioned the CEO.

He hoped to resume the company activities within a month.

Clients during the last two days have lodged five general diaries with Aditmari Police Station in this connection.

## Bribery, anomalies rule recruitment

FROM PAGE 1  
deadline, and before the seizure of Tk 70 lakh on April 9," said a senior railway official, asking not to be named.

Recruitment data are usually sent to the railway headquarters every month, but the establishment department did not get any recruitment data of the railway's east zone from January last year to February this year.

"We have repeatedly asked Mridha to send recruitment data after the expiry of deadline. But Mridha, who became general manager [east] in January 2011, did not send that on due date, as he tried to keep it secret," said the source.

Mridha and Faruq might have taken bribes from applicants in advance, but failed to give them jobs

within the February 11 deadline, it said.

"They had to use back dates on documents to legalise appointments."

Many in the railway are aware of this malpractice, the source said.

There have been allegations of widespread irregularities in recruitment in the railway's east zone. Many job seekers alleged that they had to pay Tk 3 lakh to Tk 5 lakh for each post of Class-III and-IV employees.

Railway Director General Abu Taher said none could make recruitments on back dates. "This is illegal. Punitive action will be taken if anyone is found involved in such irregularities," he told The Daily Star.

A four-member railway probe body investigating recruitment irregularities in the railway's east zone submitted a report to the railway

director general on Tuesday accusing 20 people, including Mridha for their involvement in manipulating the recruitment process.

The director general declined to make any comments on the findings of the probe but a source close to the probe body said there was evidence of corruption and irregularities in most of the recruitments made in the railway's east zone.

A departmental probe headed by the railway director general found no link of former railway minister Suranjit with the cash haul. However, according to the terms of reference of the probe, it had no jurisdiction to investigate his involvement.

On the night of April 9, Faruq's microbus driver Ali Azam drove the vehicle carrying Faruq and railway officials Mridha and Enamul Huq to the BGB headquarters in the capital. The driver loudly told the guards that there was illegal money in the microbus.

The BGB personnel searched the vehicle and found Tk 70 lakh, reportedly collected from job seekers, stashed in the vehicle. They detained the four but released them the next day after verifying their identities.

However, many in the railway claimed that the amount of money stashed in the vehicle amounted to several crores.

Faruq was sacked; and Mridha and railway divisional security commandant Enamul Huq were suspended following the incident.

**RECRUITMENT INVESTZONE**  
A total of 443 people were recruited in the railway's west zone in a year from August 2010 to August last year. The general manager (west zone) sent the recruitment data to the railway headquarters every month in line with the rules.

No recruitment was made in the west zone during the extended period of six months, said sources in the railway.

The general managers of the east and west zones enjoy absolute authority to recruit staff in railway.

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## Risky living at hill slopes

FROM PAGE 1  
Many people are living on the risky hill slopes at Motijharna, Batali Hill, Tiger Pass, Ambagan, Lalkhan Bazar, and adjacent areas in the city.

The residents are living in fear of another probable devastating incident during heavy or incessant downpour in the upcoming rainy season.

Sirajul Haque Khan, president of HMC, told The Daily Star that they met with officials of government bodies concerned to discuss the matter at Chittagong city's Circuit House on May 9.

All hill owners were directed to take steps for evacuating people from the risky slopes gradually before the monsoon, he said.

On July 7 last year, the committee, in another meeting, directed the hill owners to make lists of people living in risk on the hills within 15 days.

But only three organisations -- Chittagong City Corporation, AK Khan Co Ltd, and James Finley Bangladesh -- and an

individual owner Mir Mohammad Hasan made the lists and provided those to the committee.

No government organisation provided any list, said Sirajul Haque.

Asked about their earlier initiatives to evacuate the families from the hills, Sirajul said, "As the people residing there are very poor, they often return to the same places after evacuation drives."

The problem cannot be solved without permanent rehabilitation of the people," he said.

Tragic incidents could be avoided, if the organisations and institutions concerned took initiatives to remove the illegal structures on the hills, he said.

According to a document of HMC obtained by The Daily Star, the committee headed by the divisional commissioner also took many short and long term plans in 2007.

The committee identified 12 hills as risky. It suggested declaring the risky areas as "Red Zones", and afforestation of

those areas after relocating the residents to suitable places. It also put forward 36 proposals including construction of retaining walls to prevent landslides, and discouraging people from living on the slopes of hills.

The risky hillsides and valleys are -- Batali Hill, hill at Motijharna area, Tiger Pass Hill, hill adjacent to CDA Avenue, Lake City Residential Area Hill, VIP Hill, hill at Chittagong University, hill of Jamiatul Islamia Madrasa authority, hill adjacent to northern side of Forest Research Institute, James Finley Hill at Chitteswari Road, AK Khan Hill, and Nasirabad Properties Hill, - own the hills.

Fayez Ahmed, deputy commissioner of Chittagong, said, "We directed the law enforcers to take actions against illegal grabbers and local influential quarters who are making slums on the risky hill slopes owned by government organisations."

"Around 800 to 1,000 families are living on the hills owned by the Railway, PWD and Wasa," he added.

Fayez said they took initiative to rehabilitate the residents in safe places by providing financial help of Tk 1,000 to Tk 1,200 to each family from the fund of the district administration.

"But very few showed interest to take the help," the DC said.

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