

## Call for fast trial

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of the country. This is a serious violation of child rights and Unicef expresses its grave concern over such issues which have shaken the entire country," the statement said.

The parliamentary watchdog at a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban condemned the repeated incidents of brutal torture causing children's deaths and frequent rape of women in different parts of the country.

"We have asked the ministry officials to pursue law enforcement agencies for quick submission of charge sheets in the case of Rajon's killing [in Sylhet] and other such barbaric incidents and start the trial process without any delay," Fazilatunnessa Indira, a member of the committee, told The Daily Star.

Begum Mahbub Ara Gini, another member of the committee, said they have also suggested the ministry strongly monitor that charge sheets are submitted quickly.

Speaking at a discussion in the capital's Cirdap auditorium, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman said it is the government that has to act to stop such repressions against children.

He also said fair trial of those incidents will bring people's trust in the rule of law.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad asked the government to seek apology to the country's people over the in-fighting between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League in Magura in which a mother and her unborn child in the womb were bullet-hit.

"The culprits involved in the shooting should be brought to book and the government should seek apology to the people over the incident", Ershad, also a special envoy to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said after visiting the bullet-hit child and her mother at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki yesterday said incidents of repression against children and women had also taken place in the country before but we know more about these incidents now as media are focusing on these issues.

Talking to journalists after placing wreaths at the grave of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara, she also rejected allegations that trial process of these cases are going slowly.

Captain of Bangladesh Test Cricket Team Mushfiqur Rahim yesterday termed the repeated incidents of cruelty against children alarming and requested the government to take immediate measures to stop this.

Talking to media at a programme at the Dhaka Shishu (child) Hospital, the ace batsman also demanded capital punishment to the killers.



Mushfiqur Rahim hands over a toy to a child at Dhaka Shishu Hospital yesterday. To show his love for children, the Bangladesh Test captain went to the hospital at the invitation of Ex-Cadet Forum.

PHOTO: MUSHFIQUR'S FACEBOOK PAGE

## Govt relaxes 3-wheeler ban on highway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six days after enforcing a ban on three-wheelers and slow-moving vehicles on highways, the government yesterday relaxed the embargo for two hours daily to facilitate refuelling for vehicles.

Auto-rickshaws would be allowed to ply highways from 6:00am to 8:00am to go to CNG filling stations for refuelling, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

However, the auto-rickshaws would not be allowed to carry passengers during that time, he told reporters at Chouddagram in Comilla while visiting a construction site of a Dhaka-Chittagong four-lane project.

The new system will come into effect from today, officials at the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry said.

The ministry issued an order on July 27, banning three-wheeler auto-rickshaws, auto-tempos and other slow-moving and unfit vehicles on

highways. The order enforced to reduce road accidents came into effect on August 1.

Owners and drivers of vehicles staged demonstration protesting the ban, blockaded roads creating long tailback on different highways over last couple of days. They also demanded construction of a separate lane for slow moving vehicles on highways.

Talking to reporters at a separate spot in Feni yesterday, the minister said any challenges must be addressed to ensure discipline on highways and to protect lives.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikkyo Parishad, a platform of bus, truck and covered van owners and workers, yesterday welcomed the ban and urged the government to implement it strictly.

Owners and drivers of three wheelers, who continue protesting the ban, in a statement yesterday urged the government to sit in discussion with them to end the current issue.



Despite a ban, battery-run easy bikes and CNG-run auto-rickshaw with passengers ply the Dinajpur-Rangpur highway yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Poor feeling the pinch

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The boy, a student, put the spinach down and was about to leave. He looked disturbed. This correspondent asked him, "Wouldn't you take it?"

"Too expensive," he said and was gone.

The story of this woman and this student is also the story of millions of poor and middle-income people in the capital and elsewhere: Prices of most cooking items have shot up over the past two weeks and it's been cutting deep into their pockets.

After remaining stable in recent months, prices of vegetables, eggs and some varieties of fish are recently giving people a hard time.

Yesterday, most vegetables sold for Tk 50-60 per kilo in city markets, up by Tk 10 to 15 a kg compared to the prices last week and the week before.

Vendors blame it all on the supply

disruption because of the monsoon rain and floods in some parts of the country.

This is partly true, experts say, adding that some traders are taking advantage of the situation as well.

Normally, vegetable production falls during this time of the year, creating a demand-supply gap and thus resulting in a price increase.

But this year, torrential rains triggered by Cyclone Komen flooded croplands in 30 districts in the country's southeast and southwest region, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Around 20 percent of the 87,815 hectares of vegetable fields in these districts have been damaged or affected by waterlogging and flash floods. The districts include Jessore, Jhenidah, Comilla, Narsingdi, Meherpur and Kushtia, it said.

However, visiting the capital's Mohammadpur, Hatirpool, Jatrabari, New Market and Khilkhet kitchen markets, The Daily Star reporters saw there are plenty of vegetables contrary to traders' claim of supply shortages due to the monsoon rain.

Prices of eggs, lentils and onions have also gone up though there is no direct link between their supply and the flood.

Recently, demands for eggs have increased as people turned to it as the only source of protein because of sharp rise in the prices of beef and mutton.

In February this year, beef price went up by about 40 percent over India tightened security at its borders almost stalling smuggling of cattle into Bangladesh. And low and lower middle income people have taken mutton off their menu a long ago because of its

## Verdict 'waits

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was shot dead on the India-Bangladesh border near Choudhuryhat outpost in Cooch Behar of West Bengal in January 2011. Constable Amiyo Ghosh of 181 BSF battalion was accused of the murder.

After the fresh trial, the special BSF court last month acquitted Ghosh of the murder. Felani's father Nur Islam, the sole witness to the border killing, has already rejected the verdict and urged the Bangladesh government to help him file an appeal against the judgement, according to media reports.

The shocking photograph of the victim's body hanging from the barbed wire fence provoked international outrage.

Earlier in 2013, another BSF court had found the accused not guilty of murder. The case proceedings were reviewed by legal experts as per the BSF act and rules. The authorities ordered a fresh trial as they didn't agree with the court's findings.

Speaking at the press meet, Pathak said the Felani issue was not on the official agenda of the BSF-BGB talks as the retrial in the case was incomplete.

However, Maj Gen Ahmed separately told representatives of Bangladeshi media that the Felani issue did figure in informal talks between the two sides. The BSF wanted the BGB know from the girl's family whether they wished the judicial process to continue or something else.

"We would like to know from Felani's family members if they were satisfied with the judicial process that has taken place so far and what would they do in future. We would then communicate their decision to the BSF," added the BGB chief.

On border killing, Ahmed said the BGB would identify the areas, particularly the border outposts where such killings take place, to carry out coordinated patrol with the BSF to address the problem.

He further said the BGB will launch an awareness campaign in the vulnerable areas to dissuade Bangladeshis from travelling across the border at night.

The BSF chief said his force usually uses non-lethal weapons along the border to the extent possible and opens fire in self-defence "only in extreme situations."

Bangladesh has already come out of the low-income country status to the middle-income category and its economic indicators are "very positive". So there is no reason for people to illegally migrate to India, said Ahmed.

He, however, noted that Bangladeshis do travel to India for medical treatment and meeting their relatives.

On smuggling of cows into Bangladesh from India, the BSF DG said the number of cows smuggled came down from 20 lakh to just four lakh after his force had taken stern action against it. "The BSF wants to stop it totally."

The BGB chief said the crackdown on cow smuggling provides Bangladesh with an opportunity to be self-sufficient in livestock production.

"Bangladesh was once dependent on imported food grains, but now we are exporting our produce. Similarly, the clampdown on cow smuggling would help us build our livestock sector and attain self-sufficiency."

The BSF took special measures to curb cattle smuggling especially after Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh asked the force to check it effectively.

About illegal migration from Bangladesh to India, Maj Gen Ahmed said he would "beg to differ" in believing that any large scale migration was taking place along the frontier on India's eastern flank.

Pathak said the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) has not brought much challenges for the BSF and BGB as there was "no confusion" over border demarcation. He insisted that the historic accord will improve various aspects of border management.

On pushing fake Indian currency into India from across the border, Ahmed said he was sure that this was not being produced in his country. Some vested groups might have been using Bangladesh's land for "transit" in this regard, he noted.

He reiterated the commitment made by his country that Bangladesh's soil will not be allowed to be used against India.

He said the BSF handed them over names of some Indian insurgent groups, allegedly operating from Bangladesh. "We will not allow any criminal elements to use our soil against any of our neighbours, especially India."

has been largely successful in reigning in the prices of essentials, even during the months of Ramadan. As a result, food inflation came down to 6.07 percent in July this year from 8.14 percent in July 2013.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute, a think-tank, said the country's macroeconomic stability, exchange rate stability, stable global commodity markets and a rise in domestic production helped the government to maintain price stability.

Vegetables prices normally go up during monsoon when production falls, he said, adding that the agriculture ministry might think of taking up a programme to find out if some winter vegetables can be grown in monsoon as well.

"If we can do that, supply will grow and prices will come down," he added.

## Mob beats 'robber' to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A suspected member of an inter-district robber gang was beaten to death by a mob in Namila village of Kapasia upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Shamim, 42, son of late Gias Uddin of Pachahar village in Mymensingh's Gafargaoan upazila.

According to police, Shamim stood accused in at least 15 cases, including murder and robbery, filed with different police stations in Gazipur, Mymensingh and Netrakona.

Around 2:30am, a group of around 20 armed robbers stormed the house of poultry trader Mokbul Hossain, also the president of Singhashri Union unit Swetchhasebak League, said Ahsan Ullah, officer-in-charge of Kapasia Police Station, quoting locals.

At gunpoint, the gang then looted cash, gold ornaments and other valuables from the house.

Later, the robbers entered two nearby houses and took away valuables, including gold ornaments and cash, from there, the police official said.

Hearing screams of the victims, locals chased the robbers when they were fleeing. At one stage, locals caught Shamim near Namila-Ullusra road but the others escaped, according to the police official.

The villagers then beat up Shamim mercilessly, leaving him dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

## BSF men beat Bangladeshi to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was beaten to death allegedly by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Nitpur border of Naogaon's Porsha upazila early yesterday.

Deceased Zaria Murmu, 35, was the son of Somu Murmu of Monoharpur village of the upazila.

The BSF men of Jab Jibononpur camp in Malda of West Bengal chased a group of cattle traders around 5:00am when the traders were returning to Bangladesh by crossing a water body in a boat, said Lt Col Rafiqul Hasan, commanding officer of 14 BGB in Potnitala of Naogaon.

The BSF troops hit Zaria by an oar from another boat carrying the BSF men, injuring him. Zaria died later. However, Zaria's fellows managed to cross the border and brought the body to his house.

Three days ago, Zaria went with three other cattle traders along to India through the border for collecting cattle, said the BGB official.

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) has strongly protested the killing and sent a letter to its Indian counterpart for holding a flag meeting in this connection.

## Six cops

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Quoting the report, officials at the police headquarters said ASI Mahfuzur and Constable Azibor were stationed at a check point at Ministers' Apartments-2 on Bailey Road. On June 19, Mahfuzur went to Cox's Bazar to bring a Yaba shipment, leaving Azibor alone on duty.

Though Azibor was supposed to inform his superiors about Mahfuzur's absence, he didn't do so.

Their supervisor Inspector Razzak knew about Mahfuzur's absence. But he lied to the probe team and said Mahfuzur didn't tell him anything about it.

However, the team, led by a deputy inspector general of the Criminal Investigation Department, found out that Razzak and Mahfuzur had conversations on their cell phones a few hours before Mahfuzur was arrested in Feni on June 20.

Mahfuzur admitted to the team that he had previously brought two yaba consignments to the capital from Cox's Bazar. He also gave a confessional statement to a Feni court.

The team found that though Mahfuzur claimed he hired the Allion car that he used to carry yaba pills, the vehicle actually belongs to him. He, however, didn't register the car against his name after purchasing it.

An official at the police headquarters said Record Officer Alam didn't play his due role in transfer and posting of policemen. The probe found that many policemen served in the district for periods longer than usual, and got involved in yaba smuggling.

The official said show-cause notices would be issued to the 12 policemen, and some of them might lose jobs.

The Daily Star repeatedly called the IGP on his cell phone for comment