

SEALING ASSAM-BANGLADESH BORDER

India to mobilise huge resources

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India is planning to deploy pontoon bridges, sluice gates and airships along its Assam border to prevent illegal entries of Bangladeshis into the country.

The move to plug the riverine and vulnerable patches along a 60-kilometre stretch of the border is part of the BJP government's decision to seal the frontier completely by June next year to check the alleged illegal immigration.

With the help of high-resolution cameras, a stricter vigilance would be in place on the porous border, officials privy to the development said yesterday.

The Border Security Force (BSF), which is under federal Indian government, has constituted a team of senior officials to achieve the objective by involving officials from Assam state authorities and those from institutions like Indian Institute of Technology.

As per a blueprint prepared in this regard, 60.7-km long Assam's border with Bangladesh is to be plugged by

deploying smart technology and non-physical barriers.

In riverine areas, pontoon bridges are proposed to be laid so that BSF personnel can patrol and make observation posts atop them to monitor any movement along the border where rivers and rivulets run.

Of the 284-km India-Bangladesh border that falls in Assam, about 224-km is fenced. India shares a total of 4,096-km frontier with Bangladesh.

Also, it is proposed to build over two dozen sluice gates on the rivers, including in Dhubri area, so that the flow of water can be controlled and regulated.

Officials said the Indian border force can also create some permanent watch towers in the area marked by dense jungles.

BSF Director General K K Sharma and Additional DG A P Maheshwari had recently travelled to Assam and also briefed Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal about the survey and analysis they conducted in the border areas.

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Law enforcers pick up suspects at Berabari village in Singra of Natore during the countrywide drive against militants yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Nanosat to be in orbit

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synchronisation with Bangladesh's first communication satellite as it would help expose the country's young scientists and academics to satellite technology.

Brac University teamed up with Japan's Kyushu Institute of Technology (KIT) to launch the nanosat as early as May next year, Khalilur Rahman, an associate professor of the university's Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) department, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Along with CSE, he said, the departments of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) and Mathematics and Natural Sciences are also involved in the programme.

KIT, of Fukuoka, Japan, has been with Brac University's nanosat launching process since the signing of a memorandum of understanding a couple of years ago.

It will sign a final agreement with Brac University today to launch the nanosat through Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the International Space Station (ISS).

Erstwhile Soviet Union was the first to launch artificial earth satellite -- Sputnik 1 -- into space in 1957 which too was a low earth orbit satellite.

Khalil said ground station of the satellite has been readied on their campus while the designing of the nanosat by Bangladeshi students are nearing completion at KIT's Laboratory of Spacecraft Environment Interaction Engineering.

"We're expecting our nanosat to proceed from JAXA to ISS in March next year and then launched to the LEO [low earth orbit] within the next couple of months."

Brac University sources said once

placed in orbit, the satellite would generate high quality photographs of Bangladesh, meteorological data, vegetation, flood, urbanisation, sea area etc and the students and faculties would be able to analyse those for academic and research purposes.

Chief Scientific Officer of SPARRSO Hafizur Rahman welcomed the initiative by a private university. He told The Daily Star that going for low-cost nanosat was a good approach. "These satellites can purposefully be developed to address specific needs like agriculture, disaster, climate etc."

He said a number of Brac University students occasionally visited and worked at SPARRSO and the collaboration was there.

Khalil said the role of Arifur Rahman Khan, a Bangladeshi faculty at University of Texas in El Paso, was instrumental in instilling interest to satellite technology among Brac University fraternity.

Following his post-doctoral research at KIT, Arifur Rahman Khan was appointed as assistant professor of KIT's Laboratory of Spacecraft Environment Interaction Engineering and helped KIT improve its nanosat projects in 2013.

During that period, he visited Bangladesh and later Khalil and a few Brac University students went to KIT and the relationship turned into nanosat collaboration through an MoU signed between the two institutions on May 29, 2014.

In April this year, Arifur Rahman Khan has been hired by University of Texas at El Paso as an assistant professor to develop small satellite facilities, similar to KIT, funded by the United State's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Govt revokes licences

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licences, but stopped their production," said an official of the drug administration.

"We have issued letters to the field level offices to ensure that the 20 companies stop their operations," said Maj Gen Mustafizur Rahman, director general of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).

The DGDA also halted the production of all kinds of antibiotics (non-penicillin, penicillin and cephalosporin group) of 14 other drug companies.

"We are now preparing a report on our measures for submitting it to the High Court," Mustafizur Rahman told The Daily Star after the phone.

However, the DGDA has not ordered the withdrawal of the drugs or antibiotics of the 14 companies.

"There was no order from the High Court to withdraw the drugs," the DG said.

However, the DGDA would take legal actions against the companies if any drugs produced after June 7 were marketed, Mustafizur added.

The actions were taken following an HC order on June 7 to halt the production of drugs at the 20 companies and all kinds of antibiotics of the 14 other companies as the drugs and antibiotics they produced were sub-standard.

The court order came following a writ petition filed by the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a rights body, on June 5.

In April, an expert committee, formed in 2014 by the parliamentary standing committee on the health ministry, in its report recommended scrapping licences of the 20 drug

companies and stopping production of antibiotics of the 14 other companies.

The report prepared in two years said the drugs manufactured without following the GMP might inflict damage on health, which could even be fatal and so such drugs should be avoided for the sake of public health.

11 companies whose licences were revoked

Today Pharma Ltd, National Drug Company Ltd, Sunipun Pharmaceuticals & Chemicals Ltd, Universal Pharmaceutical Ltd, North Bengal Pharmaceutical Ltd, Drug Land Ltd, Dolphin Pharmaceutical Ltd, Jalpa Laboratories Ltd, Rid Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Remo Chemical Ltd (Pharma Division) and Kafma Pharmaceutical Ltd.

9 companies whose production was stopped

Globe Laboratories (pvt) Ltd, Medico Pharmaceutical Ltd, Aexim Pharmaceutical Ltd, Avert Pharma Ltd, Bikolpo Pharmaceutical Ltd, Spark Pharmaceutical Ltd, Star Pharmaceutical Ltd, Tropical Pharmaceutical Ltd and Skylab Pharmaceutical Ltd.

14 companies whose production of all kinds of antibiotics was halted

Ad Din Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Alkad Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Belsen Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Bengal Drugs & Chemicals Works, Bristol Pharma Ltd, Crystal Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Indo Bangla Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Millat Pharmaceuticals Ltd, MST Pharma & Healthcare Ltd, Orbit Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Pharmik Laboratories Ltd, Phoenix Chemical Laboratories Ltd, Rasa Pharmaceuticals Ltd and Save Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

ASEM SUMMIT

PM to visit Mongolia next month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Mongolia on July 14-17 to attend the 11th summit of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

Officials said the summit in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar will provide an opportunity to the leaders of Asia and Europe to discuss regional and international issues.

The PM is scheduled to attend the plenary sessions of the summit and deliver a speech on July 15-16. She is expected to hold bilateral meetings with several heads of state and government on the sidelines of the Summit.

Foreign ministry officials have already received positive response from different countries on the bilateral meetings. They said the premier was planning to visit several other countries, including Germany, Bahrain and Venezuela, after Mongolia.

Bangladesh had joined the 52-nation ASEM in 2012 to boost cooperation between Asia and Europe on political, economic and social issues.

ASEM provides a unique platform to bring Europe and Asia closer on a number of issues of global importance, be it revival of economic growth worldwide, climate change, or the post-2015 development agenda.

More than 5,000 delegates, including presidents of 15 countries, prime ministers and foreign ministers of 21 countries, and heads of international organisations as well as representatives of the media, are expected to join the 11th ASEM Summit.

Extortion in the name of crackdown on militants

Claims BNP chief Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortion is going on in the name of crackdown on militants across the country, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday.

"The real killers behind the secret killings are untouched while extortion [by the police] is going on," she said.

Khaleda made the remark while speaking at an Iftar party held at Bashundhara International Convention Centre. Association of Engineers Bangladesh, a pro-BNP professionals' body, organised the programme.

The BNP chief claimed that at least 2,200 party leaders and activists were arrested during the ongoing crackdown.

"She [Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina] assures foreigners that she would curb terrorism. But she won't do it actually. She wants to make the country unstable by spreading terrorism and allowing the rise of militancy," Khaleda said.

Khaleda said the prime minister claims to have information on the people who are carrying out militant activities. "Why is she not arresting them when she is aware of them? They're now arresting common people and leaders and activists of the BNP and other opposition parties by either hiding the perpetrators or sending them abroad."

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Arrest 'trade' goes on

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after launching a special crackdown against militants and criminals across the country on Friday.

The weeklong operation came in the wake of a string of targeted killings, especially the murder of SP Babul Akter's wife in Chittagong on June 5.

As part of the drive, police arrested 11,684 people, including 145 suspected militants, till yesterday morning. As many as 3,155 people, including 26 suspected militants, were nabbed in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

There are allegations that police are releasing many of the arrestees taking money from families.

"We always vote for Awami League. How come my son was involved in a plot to topple the government?" said Jahid's father while talking to our correspondent on the court premises in Kushtia.

Khoksa unit AL General Secretary Torikul Islam too says that Jahid's family members are diehard AL supporters.

Jahid was released on bail granted by the chief judicial magistrate yesterday.

"I have been harassed socially with this incident," said Saifullah, who also spent additional Tk 15,000 for other expenditures related to the case.

SI Anwarul denied receiving any money. "If I had taken the money, Jahidul would have been released already," he added.

Contacted, eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik said he is not surprised at such malpractices relating to arrests.

A rising number of allegations against law enforcers of taking bribe and being involved in extortion were already anticipated, he said.

MONEY BUYS FREEDOM Nurunnabi, 55, is a utensil shop owner of Bazalia Bazar in Satkania.

He was asked by some cops to go to Satkania Police Station with them to have some talks while returning home after closing the shop around 4:00pm on Monday.

At the police station, he was confined to the lock-up, and his family was asked to come over.

As the family members went to the police station, some officials said Nurunnabi is a Jamaat man and he

would be made accused in several cases if Tk 50 thousand is not paid.

"The family members paid the cops accordingly and he was released from police custody," a neighbour of Nurunnabi told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity since he was involved in the whole process.

Contacted over the phone, Nurunnabi said he does not want to go through further harassment by describing what police did to him.

Maulana Sahabuddin, a madrasa teacher in Purangar union under Satkania upazila in Chittagong, was released from custody around two hours after his detention. His family had to pay a hefty amount of money to cops.

Seven policemen picked him up from a tea stall at Purangar Bazar around 10:00pm on Sunday.

Sahabuddin declined to give further details and disclose the amount he gave to police fearing trouble again.

Mahmudul Huq, 30, a hardware store owner at Bazalia Bazar, however, is not fortunate enough to get released although he provided a good amount to police. He, however, was implicated in a simple case which helped him get bail from court.

He said three policemen asked him on Sunday afternoon to go with them to be a witness in a case. As soon as they reached the police station, he was detained in a lock-up and his family was informed.

"When my elder brother came to the police station they said to him that I am a Jamaat man," Mahmudul said, adding that he was never involved in politics and has no case against him.

Sub-Inspector Najmul Hossain of Satkania Police Station admitted that there was no case against Mahmudul. He was arrested on suspicion of taking drugs and creating chaos.

Asked about the amount given to police, Mahmudul said, he does not know as his brother paid it. "I am a small businessman. I want no trouble with police," he added.

Farid Uddin Khandakar, officer-in-charge of Satkania Police Station, however, denied all the allegations, saying that they only arrest the criminals and arrestees were sent to court.

"None was released in exchange for money. This allegation is completely

false," he said.

PRO-BNP MEN ARRESTED

Monirul Islam, 20, a diploma student at Agriculture Training Institute in Ishwardi, Pabna, was picked up on Monday and made accused in a case filed earlier against unnamed persons for stealing an electric transformer in his locality.

Monirul, who is from Debottar village in Atghoria upazila, is the information affairs secretary of Pabna district Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, a pro-BNP student body, according to his elder brother Md Mahabub Alam.

Mahabub claimed his brother is innocent.

Faruk Hossain, officer-in-charge of Atghoria Police Station, said Monirul was arrested as there are specific allegations against him.

Cops of Kawkhali Police Station in Pirojpur arrested Jakir Hossain Jewel, 40, in front of a mosque in his village Keundiya around 8:30pm on Monday when he went there to offer Tarabih prayers.

Jakir, son of late Abdul Mannan, is the organising secretary of ward-6 unit BNP in Kawkhali union.

Although Jakir was arrested at 8:30am on Monday, police in the case mentioned that it was 2:00am yesterday, said his cousin Nizamuddin.

Jewel was shown arrested in a case relating to a ballot paper snatching incident in the first phase of UP polls held on March 22. There are around 200 unnamed accused in the case.

ASI MALEK TRANSFERRED Meanwhile, ASI Malek of Naldanga Police Station was transferred to Range Reserve Force (RRI), a day after he demanded Tk 20,000 from a union parishad chairman for the release of Milon Hossain, a shop owner in Natore's Naldanga upazila.

Police picked up Milon on Saturday and produced before a court after 48 hours.

Natore SP Shyamal Kumar Mukherjee said Malek was transferred following the allegation and step would be taken if the allegation against him is proved in investigation.

[Shariful Islam wrote the story based on reports from Amanur Aman of Kushtia, Minhaj Uddin of Chittagong, Ahmed Humayun Kabir Tapu of Pabna and Habibur Rahman of Pirojpur]

AHSANULLAH ASSASSINATION

HC to deliver appeal verdict today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is set to deliver today its verdict on the death reference and appeals in the case filed in connection with the assassination of Awami League lawmaker Ahsanullah Master in Tongi in May 2004.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice Krishna Debnath on June 8 fixed today for giving the verdict.

Gunmen shot and killed Ahsanullah, also the president of Jatiya Shramik League, and Omar Faruq Ratan, a young man, and wounded 17 others in a staccato burst of fire at a biennial conference of Awami Swachhchhabak League, the AL's volunteers' front, at Noaganear near the legislator's house on May 7, 2004.

The lawmaker and others were about to leave when the gunmen led by pro-Jatiya Party Jatiya Chhatra Samaj leader Nurul Islam Dipu opened fire from behind the stage on the eastern side.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, Dhaka

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