

LALMONIRHAT BORDER BSF firing

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) company commander level flag meeting was held between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday at noon but none of the sides could establish if the unidentified dead was a Bangladeshi or Indian citizen.

BGB official sources said, the incident took place when a BSF team from its 100-Paglamari Camp of Sitokhuli police station in Cooch Behar district was fired on by a group of cattle raiders as they were trying to cross the border with Indian cows at around 4:30am yesterday dawn.

Confirming the incident the Commanding Officer (CO) of the BSF company, Lt Colonel Lt Col G. Omkar Moshraf said, "I was not identified so was not claimed from BSF. "No one along the border area has come forward to us to claim the body either," he said.

Orutal

THREE of his sons and only one person from the aggressors. Moshraf alleged that a UP member backed the attackers as they were his men and that the member even instructed the police to arrest the Moshraf family which they did.

Moshraf recalled that his son Soeb and his friend had tea and snacks at a tea stall near Sonarai Bazar.

"A scuffle erupted with the tea stall owner and he started paying some bills. One Hasan Ali, 30, son of a friend of my neighbour Ohuddin, was injured as he sided with the tea stall owner and was admitted to Damar upazila health complex the same night," he said.

On Wednesday afternoon, Hasan Ali was released from hospital and was coming to his father-in-law's [Ohuddin] house accompanied by 15-15 agitated relatives," Moshraf said.

As they reached near Moshraf's home, the local police arrested Ohuddin along with his wife Fatema, sons Halim and Rabbi, daughter Nur Banu and others rushed towards them and started beating them mercilessly with bamboo sticks, triggering a clash between the two groups.

Moshraf's daughter Rupali, 30, Rokeya, 14, and granddaughter Rakhi, 7, lost consciousness due to their injuries and were seen lying on the ground for a long time. Mozaffar, a local, said.

Ohuddin denied the allegation of beating up the women and blamed Moshraf's family for injuring his men.

He claimed that the women pretended to faint to put him in trouble. He said that he was hit on the head over phone and he, along with police, reached the spot to rescue us," Ohuddin said.

After making the arrests, police sent the women and other injured to Damar upazila health complex.

The President of the UP man Ali said, "Moshraf and his family are aggressive by nature and as an elected representative I informed the police to restore law and order."

He denied the allegation of siding with Ohuddin's family.

The United States said he saw Ohuddin's group brutally beating up the women.

Officer-in-Charge (Investigation) Ibrahim Khalil of Damar Police Station said, "We will investigate the matter and take action against the President of the UP man Ali and other police officers concerned to know the real situation."

HRW calls for free probe

FROM PAGE 1
Twenty-one of the detainees were reportedly killed, it claimed.

HRW interviewed more than 100 people, including family members and witnesses, to document these cases. Details of the testimonies and supporting legal documents were also included in the report.

"The disappearances are well-documented and reported, yet the government is in blatant disregard of its obligation to the rule of law," HRW Asia Director Brad Adams said.

"Bangladeshi security forces appear to have a free hand in detaining people, deciding on their guilt or innocence, and sentencing them, without punishment, including whether they have the right to be alive."

In the report, the global rights watchdog quoted the witnesses and family members as saying that Rapid Action Battalion or the Detective Branch (DB) of police were behind such disappearances.

Contacted, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal rejected the report, saying it was "false" and "motivated."

"Many disappear for many reasons. In people's cases, they disappear over political reasons and it has been revealed during investigations."

He claimed law enforcement agencies arrested BNP leaders following all the laws and the arrests were made on specifications.

The HRW report said 48 people have already been reported missing in the first five months of this year. But the government has so far denied the involvement of security forces in the incidents. There are allegations of severe torture and ill-treatment while in custody.

The HRW findings are similar to that of local rights organisation An O Salish Kendra that claimed at least 97 people became victims of enforced disappearance last year. The ASK also said 44 people were picked up by plainclothes men between January and June this year.

Of them, only seven returned, two were found dead and three others were shown arrested. The rest are missing.

None of the law enforcement agencies admitted their role in picking up any of the people, the ASK report said.

The report also reported that about the disappearance of 19 BNP activists. They were picked up by law enforcement authorities in eight separate incidents over a two-week period in or around Dhaka in the weeks before the January 2017 election.

Witnesses said eight of the 19 men were taken by RAB, six by DB, and the rest by unknown security forces, according to the report.

The 90 cases of enforced disappearances include three sons of prominent opposition politicians who were picked up for several weeks in August 2016. One of them was released after six months of secret detention, while the other two remain unaccounted for.

The law enforcement authorities repeatedly deny the arrests, with government officials backing these claims, often by suggesting that the men are in hiding voluntarily.

The watchdog also said the Bangladesh government should invite the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN experts concerned to investigate these allegations and make appropriate recommendations to ensure justice, accountability, and security reform.

"The Bangladesh government is making a habit of complete disregard for human rights, human life, and the rule of law," Adams said. "The government must stop both denying these abuses, instead remaining silent and relying on silence from the international community in return. This silence needs to end."

For more details on the HRW report: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/bangladesh-end-disappearances-and-secr-etions>

Picked up

FROM PAGE 20
UPON ACHIEVING he went past Dhaka Central International Medical College Hospital, which is a few feet away from the checkpoint.

According to documents of Adabar Police Station, Assistant Sub-Inspector Abdul Kalam Azad along with a few constables was on duty that morning.

The Daily Star contacted Azad last night but he refused to make any comments and requested this paper to talk to his senior officials.

Pijob Kham Sarker, deputy commissioner of Teigan division, told The Daily Star that there was a checkpoint but the policemen there did not see anything unusual then.

Ansab Habib, a security guard of the hospital on duty that morning, said he did not see or hear anything unusual either.

"I went home around 6:00am after discharging my duty and later came to know from TV that Farhad Mazhar sir was kidnapped," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Daily Star correspond yesterday saw a team, led by ASI Abdul Karim of Adabar Police Station, on duty at the checkpoint.

"We usually check vehicles on specific information," he said. Meanwhile, a manager of Hanif Paribahan gave a judicial statement to the press, saying he was accompanied by Farhad and his wife Farida Akhter.

Farhad had said her husband last called her around 7:30pm on Monday to know whether the ransom was paid.

But Nazmus Sadat Shadi of Hanif Paribahan in the statement said Farhad had bought a ticket himself from the bus service provider's Khulna counter around 4:00pm that day and he appeared in the bus.

Members of law enforcement agencies found him around 11:30pm on Monday in a Hanif bus at Naopara in Jessore. He was later taken to Dhaka and interrogated at DF office, where he told police that abductors had given him the ticket before releasing him in Khulna around 7:30pm that night.

The investigators said they were looking into the discrepancies between the statements made by Shadi, Farhad, and his family members.

Gulam Mostofa Rashel, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of West Division, told The Daily Star that they were already looking into conflicting information regarding the incident and that they were probing into the matter.

Shadi in his statement said Farhad had identified himself as Gafur while buying the ticket and then enquired about the bus he had to take for leaving. "He came back to the counter around 9:00pm and boarded the air-conditioned bus."

"The next day I learnt that Gafur was actually Farhad Mazhar," he said.

On Tuesday, Farhad in his judicial statement said several unidentified men had forced him into a microbus and blindfolded him minutes after he came out of his Adabar home to buy medicine early Monday morning.

Farhad also said he had a press conference at an hour around 10:00pm, about an hour and a half before he was found in Jessore. She told reporters that she had received the first call from her husband at 5:20pm on Monday night.

"The [Farhad] told me that some people were taking him away. He said they would kill him," Farida said. Farhad again called her from his number around 6:21am and requested her to arrange Tk 30-35 lakhs ransom, she said.

He also assured the committee of Bangladesh's full cooperation in ensuring conservation of the Sundarbans.

Tale of a 'new bird'

FROM PAGE 20
was inaccurately called Indian Roller before. We always knew that the Indian roller, available in the west of Bangladesh up to Afghanistan, looked considerably different from those seen in the east of Bangladesh down to Vietnam.

The dissimilarity between the two species was considered a natural variation of a single species. Recent groups, however, suggest that the two groups should be considered two separate species and be named differently. Consequently, the new bird group has been given the name, Indo-Chinese Roller while the western group will still be known as the Indian Roller. Fortunately for us, both the species are found in Bangladesh, unlike most other countries. For this country, therefore, the Indo-Chinese Roller is indeed a new bird out of an old stock.

The list of the country's fauna is now being updated by me and I would like to know from TV that Farhad Mazhar sir was kidnapped," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However pleasing that may be, it has not made the lives of bird-watchers any easier. In the good old days, they could call anything that looked like either the Indian Roller without paying too much attention to its plumage's colours. Now they must note the colours and the hues of every roller carefully to tell if it is an Indian Roller or an Indo-Chinese Roller.

The photographs provided here will help readers to distinguish between the two species of rollers. The Indo-Chinese Roller was photographed at Purbachal and the Indian Roller was photographed at southern Garipada in the latter. The Indo-Chinese roller has markedly brighter blue feathers above its bill and on the forehead; and with a long dark line above the eye that appears to be a line of frowning at on-lookers. It is easier to tell the two species apart by noting the colour patterns of their tails. The Indo-Chinese Roller has a turquoise bar at the base of the tail as well as turquoise colored outer tail-feathers. While flying, it appears to have two turquoise-blue inward-looking right-angle triangles at the tail-end. The tail of the Indian Roller, on the other hand, has a deep-blue terminal band instead.



Indian Roller

This colour-guide to the two species of rollers cannot be complete without a disclaimer: The two species being very closely related, they sometimes interbreed birthing chicks of a confusing mixture of colours. The birds with mixed features, however, need not annoy anyone except the people estimating the population of the two species of rollers in Bangladesh.

Carl Linnaeus, the great inventor of binomial nomenclature, named the Indian Roller *Coccyus benghalensis*, presumably because he received the first specimen of the bird from Bengal. Not surprisingly, therefore, the species has been named 'Bangla Neelkanta' in the Bengali version of the Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh published in 2009. Now the Indian Roller is split into two species; and the new species, the Indo-Chinese Roller, has been named *Coccyus affinis*. What the next edition of Bengali Encyclopedia would name this bird is anyone's guess. Could it

Unesco lifts objection'

FROM PAGE 1
However, the Unesco is yet to issue any statement on it.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) was awarded the contract to construct the 1,320MW Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant in Bagherhat's Rampal near the Sundarbans, a world heritage site, at an estimated cost of \$1.68 billion. A joint venture company named Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company Ltd (BIPECL) has been formed to implement the project.

The Rampal project is located 14 kilometers from the Sundarbans, one of the world's largest mangrove forests.

India is providing 80 percent of the financing with one percent interest on the loan payable over a period of 30 years. Bangladesh offered the land.

The Sundarbans was included in the World Heritage List in 1997 in consideration of its outstanding universal value as a unique ecosystem.

The 21-member World Heritage Committee decides on whether a country's natural or cultural heritage is put on the World Heritage List, monitors the state of conservation of the heritage sites, and can place a site on the List of World Heritage in Danger if found that the site is not properly managed by the state concerned.

In its statement, the foreign ministry said that in recent years, the World Heritage Committee voiced concern over the state of conservation of the Sundarbans and urged the Bangladesh government to take a number of steps.

It also urged the government to ensure adequate fresh water flow into the Sundarbans and preventing poaching and over extraction of its resources, the government decision to construct a coal-based power plant at Rampal at the project site, the committee's report, the ministry pointed out.

Earlier last year, a Reactive Monitoring Mission from Unesco recommended relocation of Rampal power plant, considering its likely impact on the Sundarbans.

After a long deliberation, the committee endorsed Bangladesh's decision to influence the 16th election that brought him to power, but suggested others too may have been involved and blames his predecessor Barak Obama for failing to act.

to construct Rampal power plant at its current location with necessary mitigation measures, said the report.

The committee also welcomed a number of steps taken by Bangladesh since last year to ensure conservation of the Sundarbans, it added.

At yesterday's session, a delegate from Bangladesh proposed opening a discussion on the subject.

The delegate said it wasn't clear why the committee is denying Bangladesh sufficient time to complete the Strategic Environmental Assessment as required by the committee's previous decision and why it insists on taking pre-emptive measures by halting all development work in the area without seeing the results of the SEA.

The delegate also noted that Bangladesh provided detailed information on how it is currently managing fresh water flow into the Sundarbans. "The state party [Bangladesh] needs to be given sufficient time to address the complex issue."

A high-level inter-ministerial delegation is representing Bangladesh at the UNCSG meeting. Twifiq-Elahi Chowdhury, prime minister's adviser on power, energy and mineral resources affairs, is heading the delegation.

Twifiq-Elahi thanked the committee members for helping the Bangladesh government in striking an optimum balance between economic development and heritage conservation.

He also assured the committee of Bangladesh's full cooperation in ensuring conservation of the Sundarbans.

The other members of the delegation include Ahmed Kaikans, secretary at Power Division, at Shahidul Islam, ambassador to France and permanent representative to Unesco; Ziaur Rahman, additional secretary at environment and forest ministry; Raisul Alam Mondal, DG of the Department of Environment, and Khalid Mahmud, chairman of the Power Development Board.

"Our citizens did not win freedom together. Did not survive horrors together. Did not face down evil together only to lose our freedom to a lack of pride and confidence in our values."

Five bodies found in Indonesia plane crash

AFP, Jakarta
Five people were found dead yesterday after a small plane crashed in Indonesia's Papua province a day earlier, the latest in a series of aviation accidents to hit the country.

The Pilatus Porter PC-6 aircraft lost contact around mid-day Wednesday after a 15-minute flight from the airport near Wamena city, located in the eastern province's mountainous region. It had been flying southwest toward neighbouring Nduga province.

The plane wreckage was spotted in a mountain area nine miles (14km) from Wamena airport late on Wednesday.

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Suspension, once again

FROM PAGE 1
the suspension order.

"It is painful and pathetic. An elected mayor has been suspended time and again. This wouldn't have happened had there been an election in the city."

Citing the case statement, the circular said Mannan and Gajum Kibria, accounts officer of Gazipur City Corporation (GCC), reportedly misappropriated around Tk 49 lakhs by abusing power.

There is fear that if Mannan continues in office, it might weaken the moral courage of the city corporation employees and evidence of the case might be destroyed, said the LGD.

The ACC had submitted the charge sheet in the graft case to Gazipur Special Judge's Court on January 19, 2017.

A large number of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami-backed mayors, councillors, chairmen and vice-chairmen have been suspended over the last couple of years under two provisions of the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2001.

While enforcing the law, the LGRD ministry's Local Government Division has all along been strict about the elected public representatives backed by the BNP and Jamaat.

According to sections 12 and 13 of the law, a mayor or a councillor, if convicted or charge-sheeted in a criminal case, can be suspended.

The law also stipulates that any elected public representative can be removed from office for skipping three consecutive general meetings of a local government body without valid grounds.

Data of the LGRD ministry shows that 24 mayors of city corporations and municipalities, 28 upazila chairmen, 15 upazila vice chairmen and over 150 union parishad chairmen and members have been suspended till June last year as they were charge-sheeted in criminal cases including for arson and murder between 2014 and 2015.

in the July 6, 2013 mayoral polls. He took office on August 18 that year.

On February 11, 2015, police arrested Mannan, an accused in 30 cases, over his suspected involvement in an arson attack on a bus in Gazipur on February 4.

The next month, Panel Mayor Asadur Rahman Kiron, an AL leader and councillor of the GCC, was made the acting mayor upon a court directive.

Mannan was released from jail on bail on March 2 last year. However, he was picked up again on April 15 in the same year.

The BNP leader walked free from jail on January 7 last year. SC FOR AMENDING LAW

Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, mayor of Raishahi City Corporation, was suspended twice in 2015 and 2016. He filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the suspension order and won the legal battle.

The government then moved the Supreme Court over the verdict. The apex court on March 5 this year upheld the HC verdict.

The SC in its judgment said it found arbitrary exercise of discretionary power in case of Bulbul's suspension.

The HC verdict said, "But the government has opted not to suspend those councillors. Such an action against the writ-petitioner [Bulbul] is no doubt discriminatory and arbitrary."

The HC also asked the LGRD ministry to take necessary steps to bring to the notice of the government authorities concerned and parliament the issue of amending the provision on suspension of city mayors and councillors.

Future of the West at stake

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Seeking to ease allies' concerns about the US commitment to NATO, Trump endorsed its one-for-all-and-all-for-one mutual defence pact.

The President has demonstrated not merely with words, but with its actions, that we stand firmly behind Article Five," he said, while calling for more defence spending on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

The transcript of the debate between the United States and Europe is as strong as ever, and maybe in many ways, even stronger," he added.

Looming large over his entire presidency is the US-Soviet pact of 1947, the ICBM that could deliver a nuclear payload to Alaska.

In his first public remarks since the test, Trump said Pyongyang's military saber-rattling must bring "consequences" to the US and Europe is as strong as ever, and maybe in many ways, even stronger," he added.

After repeatedly urging Beijing to ratchet up the economic pressure on North Korea, Trump will hold what promises to be a testy meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G20 in the German city of Hamburg.

Trump's Warsaw speech -- with its echoes of historic addresses overseas by Ronald Reagan and John F Kennedy -- to burnish his credentials as a global statesman and deflect suggestions he is making the US a victim of a world power.

Speaking at Krasiński Square -- which memorialises the Warsaw uprising against Nazi occupation -- Trump pointed to Poland as an example of resolve in the defence of Western traditions.

The people of Poland, the people of America, and the people of Europe still cry out "We want God," Trump said.

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