

Tension after border firing

FROM PAGE 1

the others were wearing shorts and vests (genji). All were armed, he said.

A BGB patrol team from Charchhat stopped the BSF members and said the fisherman would be handed over to the BSF authorities through a flag meeting, he said.

The BSF men then tried to take the fisherman forcibly. At this, the BGB men told the BSF members that they too intruded into Bangladeshi territory and that they would also be handed over through a flag meeting.

Panicked, the BSF members tried to rush back to the Indian side along with the fisherman. As the BGB tried to obstruct them, the BSF men opened fire, forcing the BGB members to fire back in self-defence.

Later in a flag meeting between the two sides, the BGB came to know that one BSF jawan was killed and another was injured, said the BGB official said.

He said the flag meeting was peaceful and that another meeting would be held in this regard.

Earlier in the day, Lt Col Ferdous said BSF men intruded into Bangladeshi territory and attempted to snatch away an Indian fisherman who the BGB members caught from Bangladeshi territory for catching egg-carrying hilsa.

Fisheries department officials assisted by police, BGB and river police have been conducting drives on a regular basis in the Padma since Bangladesh imposed a 22-day ban on catching egg-carrying hilsa on October 9.

As part of their regular drive, a team of three officials of the fisheries department assisted by BGB members from Charchhat BOP began patrolling the Padma along the border in Charchhat yesterday morning, said Ariful Islam, the Charchhat upazila fisheries officer.

During the patrol around 9:00am, the team found several fishermen were catching hilsa in the Bangladeshi territory of the river, said the BGB director.

When they challenged the fishermen, the patrol team managed to catch one of the fishermen who was found to be an Indian national while the others managed to flee into India.

Two hours later, BSF members went to the scene in speedboats and challenged BGB members asking them to return the Indian national, said the BGB director.

"They tried to snatch the Indian fishermen from BGB members," he said.

He claimed that BGB fired at least three bullets in the air while the BGB men fired at least 15 bullets while

leaving the scene.

In the last one week, Bangladeshi fishermen held meetings and have been complaining to the local authorities that Indian fishermen frequently intrude into Bangladeshi territory and catch hilsa even during the ban that will end on October 30.

WHAT BSF SAYS

In a statement, the BSF said three Indian fishermen were caught by Bangladeshi officers and two of them were released later.

"This morning, three Indian fishermen went fishing in the Padma river in the border area. Two fishermen returned and approached the Kaknarichar BSF post, saying that the Border Guard Bangladesh had apprehended them and later released two of them," said the statement.

"Around 1030 hrs, the Post Commander and five troopers approached the BGB patrol in a BGB boat. During the flag meeting, the BGB patrol not only refused to release the Indian fisherman but also tried to cordon the BSF troops. Sensing that the situation is worsening, the BGB party immediately returned. BGB troops opened fire on the returning BSF party," it added.

Both BSF soldiers were evacuated to the nearest medical facility, where Head Constable Vijay Bhan Singh was declared dead on arrival. The injured soldier is being treated in a hospital, the statement said.

Vijay Bhan Singh, 50, was a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad.

UK Labour MP resigns over 'anti-Jewish racism'

AFP, London

An MP for Britain's opposition Labour Party has resigned, accusing leader Jeremy Corbyn of allowing anti-Semitism to flourish in the party.

Louise Ellman warned that, with a possible general election upcoming, a Corbyn premiership could pose a "threat" to the country.

Her resignation comes months after several MPs resigned over Labour's stance on Brexit and the leadership's handling of accusations of anti-Semitism within the party.

Ellman, 73, said she would not join another party and hoped she could return to her "political home" in the Labour Party under a different leadership.

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HC stays payment of GP

FROM PAGE 1

the attorney general's office, possibly on Sunday, to have the injunction vacated.

He said they were ready to appoint the administrators as per the rules of the telecom act.

The minister claimed that his ministry had sent the approval to the BTRC for appointing the administrators.

The Daily Star could not independently verify if the order reached the regulator as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Earlier, Sharif Bhuiyan, a lawyer for Grameenphone, said the BTRC on April 2 sent a letter demanding Tk 12,579.95 crore from the carrier as "tax, revenue share, and late fees". He said 27 items in the letter were illegal.

Grameenphone then filed a case with a Dhaka court seeking remedy. It asked the court to direct the BTRC so that the regulator does not realise the money and harass the carrier until the issue was resolved.

The court, however, rejected Grameenphone's plea.

Grameenphone then moved to the High Court seeking a stay on the BTRC realising the money.

The court yesterday issued the order in favour of Grameenphone.

Meanwhile, Robi, the second largest carrier in the country, has also filed a petition with the HC regarding the BTRC trying to realise Tk 867.24 crore from it.

The hearing on its petition might be held next week.

BTRC Chairman Md Jahirul Haque

3 policemen suspended

FROM PAGE 1

on Wednesday night. At that time, locals caught them red-handed in front of Shariatpur Water Development office around 10:30pm, said Biswajit Boiragi, district fisheries officer in Shariatpur.

On information, superintendent of Shariatpur police Abdul Momen and other administrative officials rushed there. Later, the SP suspended the policemen, said the fisheries officer.

Contacted, Sirajul Islam, reserve inspector of Shariatpur Police Lines, said departmental action would be taken against the policemen after probe.

Meanwhile, mobile courts assisted by river police jailed or fined 16 fishermen for catching hilsa from different rivers across the country.

Of them, 131 fishermen were given different jail terms, while 30 others were fined Tk 1.38 lakh, BM Harun-Ar-Rashid, superintendent (crime and operations) of river police, told The

Daily Star yesterday.

Around 22.68 lakh metres of current nets, 45 boats, seven trawlers and 1,389 kg of hilsa were seized during the drives.

The seized current nets were burnt and the fish were distributed among the poor, the police officer said.

The fisheries and livestock ministry, river police and local administrations are conducting drives across the country.

In Munshiganj, mobile courts gave different jail terms to 57 fishermen for catching brood hilsa in Lauhajong and Sreengar upazilas, while 11 others, including seven women, were fined Tk 24,000 for possessing hilsa in Sirajdikan upazila.

In Tangail, two mobile courts in separate incidents jailed 12 fishermen for 15 days and fined nine others Tk 31,500 for netting hilsa in the Jamuna river in Sadar and Bhupur upazilas.

Our Faridpur, Munshiganj, and Tangail correspondents contributed to this report.



A shelter home in Bangla Bazar area of Gaibandha's Haripur union is in a sorry state in the absence of renovation. Built under a project named Ashrayan Prakalpa, the structure was hit hard by flood and erosion in 2015. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: K M REZAUL HOQUE

ACC to probe alleged graft in purchase

FROM PAGE 1

committee chief.

According to ACC rules, an enquiry should be completed within 45 working days.

On May 21, ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmood had said the commission was closely monitoring the graft issue.

He said they would take necessary actions based on the findings of the two investigations by the housing and public works ministry.

According to media reports, the purchase prices of various items to furnish 966 flats of the project's Russian engineers and other officials were abnormally higher than the market prices.

The reports claimed that each pillow was bought for Tk 5,957, and the cost of carrying it to a flat was Tk 760. An electric stove was bought at Tk 7,747 and the cost for carrying it from the ground floor to the top floor was Tk 6,650. Each building of the project has 16 to 20 floors.

The reports also said the price of an electric iron was Tk 4,154 and the carrying cost was Tk 2,945.

When the matter came to light, the housing and public works ministry formed two probe committees. They found anomalies involving Tk 36.4 crore in purchasing furniture and

other household items.

The probe bodies recommended departmental and legal actions against 50 project officials, including Engr Masudul Alam, former project director of Green City Housing Project under the power plant, over the irregularities.

On May 22, Masudul was made a reserve officer at the Public Works Department.

TWO CASES FILED

Meanwhile, the ACC yesterday filed a case against eight people, including former chairman of erstwhile Farmers Bank Mahbubul Haque Chisty, his brother Majedul Haque Chisty and ex-additional managing director AKMM Shamim for allegedly misappropriating about Tk 114.34 crore from the bank.

The five other accused are Abdul Wadud, proprietor of Shababa Apparels, Rashed Ali, owner of ADM Dyeing and Washing, Meftah Ferdous, proprietor of Tanuj Corporation, Golam Sarwar, owner of Mohammad Ali Transport and Ismail Hawladar, proprietor of Kanam Products.

Farmers Bank has been renamed as Padma Bank as the troubled lender tries to remake its image.

The bank, which was established in 2013, became a hotbed for financial

irregularities in less than three years of operation. More than Tk 3,500 crore was siphoned out from the bank, according to Bangladesh Bank.

On April 10 last year, the ACC arrested Chisty, his son Rashedul Haque Chisty and two officials of the bank in connection with a Tk 160 crore laundering case.

Also yesterday, the ACC filed another case against controversial business tycoon Moosa Bin Shamsher, his brother Faruk-uz-Zaman Chowdhury, owner of Auto Define Wahidur Rahman, Assistant Engineer Ayub Ansari of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority and one Fareed Nabir for using fake documents to dodge an import tax of about Tk 2.15 crore on a luxury car.

Two years ago, the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) asked the ACC to sue Moosa on charges of dodging the tax.

According to the case statement, a seized Range Rover used by Moosa was registered with the Bhola office of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, with a bill of entry showing Tk 17 lakh was paid in taxes.

But an investigation found that no bill of entry was submitted to the Chattogram Customs House.

Outside -- and has also assured his European counterparts that he can get the deal through.

French President Emmanuel Macron said he was "reasonably confident" the deal could be ratified.

But Johnson has no majority among MPs, and his threat to leave the EU with or without a deal this month has exacerbated existing divisions in parliament.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the only way out was for a second referendum, amid speculation such a motion could be put to MPs at Saturday's sitting.

"The best way to get Brexit sorted is to give the people the final say in a public vote," he said.

However, it is not clear there is enough support in the House of Commons for a new referendum, and Johnson's government is strongly opposed.

Opinion polls show Britons remain deeply divided over Brexit, although the balance has shifted slightly in favour of staying in the EU.

New Brexit deal reached

FROM PAGE 1

The deal is a personal victory for Johnson, a leader of the 2016 Brexit referendum who was told repeatedly by EU leaders that they would not give him a new deal.

But it could quickly turn to defeat if the House of Commons -- which rejected a previous divorce text three times -- again refuses to play ball.

The immediate reaction was hostile. Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which props up Johnson's Conservatives, said it "will be unable to support these proposals".

The main opposition Labour, Scottish National and Liberal Democrat parties also spoke out against it.

Their response sent the pound sinking again after it had earlier risen to five-month peaks on news of the deal.

The draft agreement was forged just weeks before Britain was due to leave the bloc, ending more than four decades of close economic and political ties with its nearest neighbours.

Weeks of tense negotiations focused on changing the arrangements to

keep open the border between British Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland.

All sides agree they do not want infrastructure on the frontier, to avoid exacerbating tensions over Britain's control of Northern Ireland that caused decades of deadly violence up until the 1990s.

The new plan would see Northern Ireland remain British legal territory but trade under EU regulations.

"There will be no border on the island of Ireland and the (EU's) single market will be protected," Juncker said.

But it would involve some customs and tax checks with the rest of the UK, and the DUP warned that did not go far enough, as there would be no vote before the plans came into effect.

Johnson met repeatedly with DUP leaders this week in a bid to keep them

onside -- and has also assured his European counterparts that he can get the deal through.

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8,000 acres of forests razed

FROM PAGE 1

ministry officials will place the report that focuses on the damage to the ecology that had taken place in Ukhia and Teknaf upazilas since the Rohingya influx started in August 2017.

According to the report, a total of 6,164.02 acres of reserved forest have been razed to make way for the settlements in the upazilas. Trees have been chopped down for firewood in an additional 1,837 acres of forest.

Of the 6,164.02 acres lost to settlements, 4,136.52 acres were natural forest and 2027.50 acres planted forest. The land belongs to the Cox's Bazar South Forest Department.

Rohingya refugees have been living in 34 camps, of which 26 are in Ukhia and eight in Teknaf.