

BSF sets up watch post in no-man’s land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Violating the border rules, Indian Border Security Force has set up a temporary watch post in the no-man’s land at Shahebnagar frontier of Rajshahi’s Godagari upazila.

Border Guard Bangladesh protested the move during a flag meeting between Shahebnagar BGB and Lobongola BSF in West Bengal’s Murshidabad district yesterday, said Col Ferdous Mahmud, director of Rajshahi BGB Battalion-1.

The BSF set up the watch post around 70 yards inside the no-man’s land on Friday night. The violation of the border rules was detected yesterday after both the forces identified their territories during the flag meeting, the BGB official said.

Some border pillars were damaged there in a flood last year.

“We have expressed our concern at the unusual move. None of the border forces can build any structure within 150 yards of the no-man’s land as per the rules,” Col Ferdous said.

Locals said they spotted the new BSF watch post, made of bamboo, straw and jute stalk, in the no-man’s land on Saturday morning. Some BSF members were staying there.

On Monday, BSF men left the post twice after BGB men signalled them to leave. However, the BSF members returned at night, said locals.

They said BSF men tried a few times yesterday to go to the post, but failed to do so as the BGB men were patrolling the area.

Meanwhile, at Char Khanpur frontier of Rajshahi’s Paba upazila, some 250 locals, alongside the BGB men, were patrolling the border area to resist any intrusion into Bangladesh territory.

Nayek Subedar Nazrul Islam, in-charge of Char Khanpur BGB outpost, said they heard that there would be intrusion into Bangladesh territory, and that they sought assistance from locals to resist any such incident.

Locals said the BGB members in a meeting asked the villagers to patrol the border area in shifts. The villagers were working with the border guards round the clock in four shifts.

Myanmar army

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Two pregnant women were among the wounded, and the woman killed in the shelling was a mother of three, Tun Aung Kyaw, a regional MP from Mrauk U, told Reuters.

“The government must prioritise the safety of civilians immediately. They must control their security forces,” he said.

Before the recent fighting, Mrauk U was popular with international tourists who came to see the ancient temples that dot the landscape.

Now, displaced villagers camp in tents in the shadows of the monuments and, in the town, families sleep in bunkers built with sandbags to escape shelling and gunfire.

“This has happened in a civilian area in Mrauk U town and also near... an ancient pagoda,” said Zaw Htun, a local teacher. “It is unacceptable.”

Let Rohingya

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education for Rohingya children,” he said.

The HRW said Myanmar also refused to approve the use of its curriculum in the camps, so UNICEF, the UN agency for children, developed an informal education programme from scratch.

The programme, submitted for government approval in April 2018, was designed to work around the Bangladesh government’s ban on formal education, but Dhaka took a year to approve the first two “levels,” equivalent to preschool and the beginning of primary school.

The government has still not approved the upper three levels, it said.

Bangladesh’s Refugee Rehabilitation and Repatriation Commissioner Mahubb Alam Talukder said it was wrong to say that Bangladesh was not providing education to the Rohingya children.

“We are providing informal education,” he told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

Asked about secondary education, he said the Rohingyas were not Bangladeshi citizens and could not be provided secondary education under the curriculum of the country.

Some 750,000 Rohingyas fled brutal atrocities in Myanmar’s Rakhine State and took shelter in the camps in Cox’s Bazar since August 2017. They joined some 300,000 other Rohingyas who fled previous waves of violence in Myanmar.

Despite two attempts at repatriation, no Rohingya volunteered to return to Rakhine, saying the conditions in Myanmar were not conducive for their return and there was no guarantee of citizenship.

Myanmar is now facing charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which will hold its first hearing in The Hague between December 10-12.



Agitating jute mill workers set fire to tyres on BIDD Road in front of Daulatpur Jute Mills in Khulna city yesterday morning. The workers of nine state-run jute mills in Khulna-Jashore industrial area abstained from work for 24 hours from 6:00am to press home their 11-point demand, including payment of arrears and implementation of a new wage board award.

PHOTO: STAR

Nine jute mills

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They also urged the government to buy jute products for other sectors from the protest.

Some workers staged street drama in front of Daulatpur Jute Mill to publically depict their plight. Roads near the mills were blocked as hundreds of workers gathered at the mills’ gates.

The jute mills that faced the protest are Daulatpur Jute Mill, Khalishpur Jute Mill, Crescent Jute Mill, Platinum Jute Mill, Star Jute Mill, Jashore Jute Industry and Carpeting Jute Mills.

Mizanur Rahman, worker of Platinum Jute Mill, told The Daily Star that they wanted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s intervention.

The last three months have been extremely difficult for us and our families, he added.

He further said, “Government should take pragmatic steps to run the

jute sector. Otherwise, we all will lose our jobs.

“Some BJMC [Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation] officials threatened us saying the government would take back Tk 100 crore to the finance ministry [which was allocated for jute industry’s development] if we do not call off the strike.”

Asked, Murad Hossain, former president of Crescent Jute Mill, said BJMC never paid attention to run the sector properly.

“BJMC targeted to buy 8,31,893 quintals of raw jute for the current fiscal year, but only 2,02,267 quintals were bought in last five months that is 24 percent,” he said, adding that if mills failed to buy targeted raw jute, production would also be hampered.

On the other hand, Boniz Uddin Miah, liaison officer of BJMC Khulna zone, alleged that mills failed to produce less than the target due to lack

of modern machines and equipment.

“How would BJMC solve this problem?” he asked.

Over 31,000 people work at the nine jute mills in Khulna-Jashore industrial belt on permanent and temporary basis. The government announced a wage board in June 2015, but it is yet to be implemented.

On top of that, authorities of Crescent Platinum, Star jute mills owe money to its workers for 11 weeks, Khalishpur Jute Mill owes for nine weeks and Daulatpur jute mill owes for 10 weeks.

Other jute mills also have a due for at least seven to eight weeks to its workers.

Yesterday’s work abstention was a part of the workers’ seven-day agitation programme that was announced on November 23 under the banner of “State-owned Jute Mill Collective Bargaining Association (CBA) and Non-CBA Sangram Parishad”.

No one except Bangladeshis

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office in the secretariat, reports UNB.

There is no reason to panic over the news of people being pushed into Bangladesh from India, said the minister, adding that they were still unsure of the nationalities of the “trespassers”.

“Although they tried to enter, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel didn’t let them in.”

Last month, BGB detained 329 people on charges of “trespassing” into Bangladesh from India, BGB officials told The Daily Star, adding that they were sent to jail.

The “trespassers” claimed to be Bangladeshis, but failed to provide any evidence. They said to have fled from India fearing police harassment and detention there.

Secretary of the foreign ministry Shahidul Haque last week said Dhaka was observing the situation.

Meanwhile, Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR), a Kolkata-based civil rights group, has claimed that 59 people were “pushed back to Bangladesh in the most inhuman way,” violating the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries.

On December 2, The Hindu reported that the Karnataka police handed over the “Bengali-speaking alleged foreigners” to Indian Railway Police in Kolkata who sent the detainees to a temporary shelter in Howrah.

However, Toufique Hasan, deputy high commissioner of Bangladesh in Kolkata, said he had no “official knowledge” about the matter, the report said.

A senior government official of the West Bengal said, “Push back from India to Bangladesh is a regular, albeit legally unclear, feature of returning

alleged Bangladeshis to their country through the Bengal border”.

APDR said the West Bengal government encouraged the push back at the late hours of night.

The rights group raised question about how the detainees were identified as “all Bangladeshis” without any legal procedure. It also blamed the Bangladesh High Commission for its “studied silence”.

Asked, minister Asaduzzaman said when the visas of Bangladeshis visiting India expire, the country send them back.

He also said such push-in by India is not a provocative act.

If the number was hundreds or thousands, it would have been a matter of discussion, he added.

“India hasn’t officially sent any letter in this regard. We’re ready to receive those who are trying to come back if they’re Bangladeshis. Else, we won’t let them in.”

Buet fixes expulsion as punishment

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campaigning, participating in processions, meetings and putting up graffiti or posters in the university, forces or induces or inspires others to take part in the above activities can also be given the same punishment, it mentioned.

With the steps, the authorities have fulfilled all the three demands of the Buet students placed after Abrar Fahad was killed.

The notice added that punitive action and penalties for the offences related to ragging and political involvement of students were decided as per the recommendations by a committee formed in this regard.

The students were demonstrating on the campus, demanding expulsion of 25 charge-sheeted accused in the Abrar murder case, punishing students involved in ragging incidents at Buet dormitories, and formulating specific rules prohibiting ragging and organisation-based politics.

Following the notice, the agitating students said they would return

to classes and were positive about appearing in the term finals likely to start on December 28.

Talking to The Daily Star, a spokesperson of the protesters said they would hold a press conference today to let all know their decision after talking to teachers and other students.

Amid protest on the campus, the Buet authorities on October 11 banned all political activities and suspended 19 students, mostly leaders of the university unit Bangladesh Chhatra League, accused in the Abrar murder case.

The academic activities of the university remained halted as the protesters on October 15 declared not to return to classes until the authorities expel the charge-sheeted accused in the Abrar murder case.

On November 14, protesters placed two fresh demands -- punishing students involved in previous incidents of ragging at Buet dormitories, and formulating specific rules prohibiting ragging and organisation-based politics.

On November 22, the Buet

authorities expelled 26 students in connection with Abrar killing and suspended nine other students on November 28 as their involvement in previous incidents of ragging was found.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday ordered police to attach properties of four fugitives accused in the Abrar murder case.

They are Buet BCL deputy office secretary (sacked) Mustafa Rafid and its members Morsheduzzaman Jishan, Ehtashamul Rabbi Tanim (sacked), and Morshed Amartya Islam.

The 21 other charge-sheeted accused were arrested.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Kaisarul Islam passed the order after police submitted the reports on execution of arrest warrant issued by the court on November 18.

Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronics engineering department, died after he was brutally beaten by some BCL men at Sher-e-Bangla Hall of the university on early hours of October 7.

Moulvibazar’s Kulaura upazila today, she added.

Born in Kulaura on December 17, 1932, Rowshon completed her intermediate from Barishal’s Brojomohun College in 1948.

Rowshon got involved in student politics after she was admitted at DU in 1949, from where she completed her bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1953.

In her profession life, she worked as a teacher at several schools and colleges in the city, including Kakoli High School and Nazrul Academy. She went on retirement in 2002.

2010s the hottest

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temperatures.

The world’s seas are now a quarter more acidic than 150 years ago, threatening vital marine ecosystems upon which billions of people rely for food and jobs.

In October, the global mean sea level reached its highest on record, fuelled by the 329 billion tonnes of ice lost from the Greenland ice sheet in 12 months.

22 MILLION DISPLACED

Each of the last four decades has been hotter than the last.

And far from climate change being a phenomenon for future generations to confront, the effects of humanity’s insatiable, growth-at-any cost consumption means millions are already counting the damage.

The report said more than 10 million people were internally displaced in the first half of 2019 -- seven million directly due to extreme weather events such as storms, flooding and drought.

By the end of the year, the WMO said new displacements due to weather extremes could reach 22 million.

“Once again in 2019 weather and climate related risks hit hard,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

“Heatwaves and floods which used to be ‘once in a century’ events are becoming more regular occurrences.”

At just 1C hotter than pre-industrial times, 2019 has already seen deadly heatwaves in Europe, Australia and Japan, superstorms devastate southeast Africa, and wildfires rage out of control in Australia and California.

‘NOT ADAPTING’

Nations are currently in crucial talks in Madrid aimed at finalising rules for the 2015 Paris climate accord, which enjoins countries to work to limit global temperature rises to “well below” 2C.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) last year outlined how vital it was for mankind to aim for a safer cap of 1.5C -- ideally by slashing greenhouse gas emissions and retooling the global economy towards renewable energy.

The UN said last week in its annual “emissions gap” assessment that the world needed to cut carbon emissions

by 7.6 percent each year, every year, until 2030 to hit 1.5C.

Instead, emissions are rising.

And while governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars subsidising fossil fuels, there appears to be no consensus in Madrid over how countries already dealing with climate-related catastrophe can fund efforts to adapt to the new reality.

“Our economic activities continue to use the atmosphere as a waste dump for greenhouse gases,” said Joeri Rogelj, Grantham Lecturer in Climate Change at Imperial College London.

Even if all Paris pledges were honoured, Earth is still on course to be more than 3C warmer by the end of the century.

“There is no indication of a fade out of the warming,” Taalas told reporters. “The numbers will be higher if we continue our current behaviour.”

Part of the discussions in Madrid is aimed at getting countries to increase their climate action ambition ahead of a deadline next year.

Friederike Otto, deputy director of the University of Oxford’s Environmental Change Institute, said the WMO report “highlights that we are not even adapted to 1.1 degree of warming.”

“And there is no doubt that this 1.1 degree is due to the burning of fossil fuels,” she said.

Christian Aid’s global climate lead Kat Kramer said the WMO report showed the need for concrete progress in Madrid.

“Delegates have no excuse to block progress or drag their feet when the science is showing how urgently action is needed,” she said.

‘Robber’ killed

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bullet wounds while others managed to flee, he added.

Later Ali was taken to Islampur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

Three policemen were also injured in the “gunfight”, the police official said.

Police also claimed to have recovered one revolver and 500 yaba pills from the spot.

Woman, maid found dead

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Division Police, said Rahima had been living in a two-bedroom flat of the four-storey building in Mirpur-2, along with Soheli, for the last six months.

Rahima’s husband Quddus Mia lives in Jashore.

The murder came to light when Sumi’s aunt, Tahmina, came to the flat to visit her niece yesterday afternoon and found the door to their apartment unlocked.

Entering the flat, she found the bodies of Rahima and Sumi lying on the floor. Hearing her screams, neighbours came to the spot and then informed police of the matter, law enforcers said.

Additional Commissioner (crime) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Krishna Pada Roy said, “We suspect the

women were strangled to death. We are investigating the matter.”

Quoting locals, the official said there had always been many frequent visitors to the flat and that police were looking into whether any of them was involved.

Mirpur police said the place looked like it had been ransacked.

Rahima’s daughter Rashida, who lives in Narayanganj with her husband, said, she could not say what items were missing. She also could not say how much money her mother had.

“Soheli informed me of the deaths. My mother had been ill for the past few days and received treatment recently,” she said.

A crime scene management unit of the Criminal Investigation Department arrived around 9:00pm last night and collected evidence.

ACC sues 16 for graft

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Mosharrof Hossain Talukder, Rajib Hasan, Nasir Uddin Talukder, Anup Kumar Barua, KN Alam, Syed Ahmed Patwari, and Monir Ahmed Majumder, former manager (import) AKM Manjurul Haq, and former assistant manager (commercial) Md Shahjahan.

ACC Deputy Director Nasir Uddin filed the case with its integrated district office. The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the first information report (FIR).

The FIR says the Biman in its meeting on May 24, 2012, had decided to realise an additional charge for handling each kg of cargo carried by non-scheduled air freighters. The additional charge was between \$0.1068 and \$0.1869.

The Biman authorities informed the GM (cargo) and other officials concerned about the decision and directed them to follow it. But the ACC probe found that apart from a few, the officials of the cargo department didn’t realise money.

The investigation revealed that the cargo officials didn’t realise Tk 118 crore as additional handling charge from 2012 to 2017.

Biman’s internal audit on the cargo department also found misappropriation of money from July 2015 to June 2017. This caused revenue loss to the government.

Since spreading its wings in 1972, the national airliner incurred huge losses in most of the years due to widespread corruption and mismanagement, aviation experts said.

Except the fiscal years 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17, Biman counted losses in six out of the last nine fiscal years, said sources at the company.

In 2007, the then military-backed caretaker government had turned Biman into a public limited company with an aim to make it a profitable venture.

The civil aviation ministry recently revealed widespread corruption and irregularities in different sectors of the national airliner, including recruitment of pilots, sale of tickets, operation of non-scheduled freighter and taking lease of aircraft.

Following the revelation, the ministry recently made a move to overhaul Biman’s total management and make it a profitable organisation, Civil Aviation Ministry Secretary Mohibul Haque told The Daily Star. The national carrier now operates flights on 17 international and seven domestic routes with a fleet of 16 aircraft. Six of the planes are on lease.

New dinosaur

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body of water, and are thought to have travelled as far east as China.

“The diversity of these ancient animals was much greater than we could ever have guessed at, and is likely orders of magnitude more diverse than we will ever be able to discover from the fossil record,” University of Alberta paleontologist Michael Caldwell told Phys.org.

The new findings suggest that there could have been as many different species of pterosaur as there are bird species today.

The fossil is the first complete pterosaur from Lebanon, and has revealed new insight into the life of the flying dinosaur, which had wingspans of 30 feet and could weigh as much as 550 pounds.

The fossils were originally discovered more than 15 years ago, but it has taken researchers years to fully analyse them.

The fossils are currently stored in the Mineralogy Museum at Saint Joseph University in Beirut, and the analysis was done in collaboration with researchers from University of Alberta and the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.