

‘Bangladeshis killed on border were criminals’

Says BSF chief at press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Director General (DG) of India's Border Security Force Pankaj Kumar Singh yesterday justified border killings, saying all Bangladeshis killed on the border were criminals.

Lethal force is used on people who are on the criminals' list, which is exchanged beforehand between BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). When these people overpower BSF officers, lethal weapons are used.

The BSF chief was responding to queries at a joint press conference, following a DG-level conference between BSF and BGB at the latter's Pilkhana headquarters in Dhaka.

Killings on the border are continuing, despite BSF making commitments after every talk to bring deaths to zero. Noted rights activist Nur Khan Liton said it is an ill attempt by BSF to evade its crimes by grossly terming those killed on the border as "criminals".

Past incidents show that Bangladeshis who crossed the border due to them not having a clear idea about the territory were also killed, he said.

He said if crossing the border is an offence, the offenders can be detained or arrested.

According to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), five people were shot dead on the border by BSF this year till June, while the number of deaths last year was 18.

At the press conference, the BSF DG said incidents like smuggling, human trafficking and illegal entry are happening because of "bad people on both sides of the border".

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A little boy walks on the exposed hot rocks at Suhrawardy Udyan as the water fountain in front of Swadhinata Stambha dried up due to an ongoing renovation work. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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No kitchen markets at undesignated spots: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Tazul Islam yesterday said wholesale and retail kitchen markets should be set up at places designated by the government to reduce traffic jam and public hassles.

"Action will be taken against those who will set up shops occupying roads that hampers people's movement," he said.

He said this after visiting Gabtoli kitchen market aiming to relocate Karwan Bazar there.

"Karwan Bazar was established long ago and goods from this market are distributed in retail markets of the city. Traders coming from different parts of the country struggle to reach here while distribution also becomes a struggle due to traffic jam. So, we have started working on how Karwan Bazar can be shifted to a different suitable point of

Prioritise the marginalised

Say speakers at Dalit-Harijan Conference



PHOTO: STAR

Participants at the "Dalit-Harijan Conference-2022" at National Economic Council auditorium yesterday. Manusher Jonno Foundation and its partner organisations arranged the event.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said the government is committed to taking the country towards justice, righteousness and rule of law.

"We don't deny that there is injustice here," the minister said, adding they also accept the fact that such injustice cannot be eliminated overnight.

He was addressing the "Dalit-Harijan Conference-2022" at the National Economic Council auditorium in the capital, organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation and its partner organisations.

On the proposed anti-discrimination law, the minister said he will inquire about its latest progress.

Addressing the event as chief guest, the planning minister said their pledge is to prioritise the marginalised.

He said the government wants to reach people living in remote

and hard-to-reach areas where discrimination and injustice are still prevalent.

At the event, members of Dalit and Harijan communities spoke about different challenges they have to face in all spheres of life, including the discrimination that they face regularly and sought government steps to address their problems.

Making a five-point demand while reading out a written statement, Dalit community leader Bikash Kumar Das said the proposed anti-discrimination law should reflect suggestions made by members of Dalit and Harijan communities.

He demanded affirmative action and special quotas for Dalit and Harijan communities in government jobs and educational institutions as well as better living facilities for them.

The government has selected 1,000 villages under a project where craftsmen belonging to different underprivileged communities live

to bring them under the cottage industry scheme, said Shawpan Bhattacharjee, state minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives.

Work has already started in 60 to 70 such villages, he said, addressing the event as special guest.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said they have made several suggestions for the government's consideration in regard to bringing a change to the anti-discrimination bill before it is passed in the parliament.

"At present, the parliamentary standing committee [on law ministry] is working on the bill. We are hopeful the law will fulfil the expectations of the marginalised communities," she said.

However, enacting a law is not the ultimate course of action. There is also the necessity for its effective implementation, she said while moderating the event.

The proposed law cites a

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To contribute to nation's development

Expatriate alumni of St Gregory's High School and College form not-for-profit org

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to network and contribute to the country's upward trajectory, alumni of St Gregory's High School and College who reside in North America have decided to organise themselves into the not-for-profit organisation Gregorians of North America, Inc (GNA).

To this end and to commemorate the prestigious institution's 140th anniversary, the first annual meeting of GNA will take place in Washington DC on July 30, 2022, said a press release.

Based on preliminary registration, about 300 people, including 200 alumni of the past seven decades, are expected to attend the day-long event.

Highlights of the event will include an interactive session between teachers and students in Dhaka and conference attendees.

Spearheaded by former vice chancellor of Brac University, Dr Syed Saad Andaleeb, former students of the school came

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'It's not logical'

Says Zafrullah on DSCC claim of Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital owing Tk 2.40cr as municipal tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has claimed that Dhanmondi's Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital allegedly owes about Tk 2.40 crore of municipal tax to it. However, Gonoshasthya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury termed the demand illogical.

Dr Zafrullah made the remarks to the journalists while handing over a cheque worth Tk 10 lakh to DSCC executive magistrate Md Moniruzzaman on Wednesday as part of the outstanding holding tax.

Zafrullah said, "Gonoshasthya is a charity organisation. Everyone knows that we provide treatment at the lowest cost -- even at a lower cost than the government. Our demand was to pay tax at the same rate as the other government hospitals, including Dhaka Medical College Hospital."

Earlier, he told DSCC Executive Magistrate Moniruzzaman that he will discuss a waiver opportunity with the mayor.

However, DSCC public relations officer Md Abu Nasher yesterday said DSCC did not get any application from Gonoshasthya.

Moreover, no Gonoshasthya representative met DSCC mayor in this regard till yesterday evening, he informed.

Executive magistrate Moniruzzaman informed reporters on Wednesday that there was an order from the mayor to collect the outstanding revenue, so the revenue officer along with ward councillor came to collect taxes.

The revenue officer said, "This hospital in Dhanmondi was previously a two-storied building. Later, it was made seven-storied, and then 10-storied. But Gonoshasthya has been paying tax at the older rate."

Zafrullah said there are more government hospitals there, but DSCC decided to tax this hospital as a commercial building. He also said he will clear the due if he is given a payment period of 15-30 days.

ARBITRARY USE OF POWER BY COPS

SC to hear review petition on Oct 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned, till October 27, the hearing on a review petition filed by the government, challenging its judgement in 2016 that upheld a High Court verdict against arbitrary exercise of power by law enforcers in 2003.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, passed the adjournment order, following a prayer moved by Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, seeking time to prepare for placing arguments.

The HC delivered its verdict on April 7, 2003, responding to a petition filed by a group of rights organisations, including Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, and individuals, after the death of university student Shamim Reza Rubel in police custody on July 23, 1998.

In the judgement, the HC asked the government to amend some provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which gave police disproportionate powers.

The HC also issued a 15-point directive and asked the government to comply with it immediately to stop police from making arbitrary arrests on suspicion and torturing arrestees on remand.

But the then BNP-led government had opted to file an appeal against the verdict, and the Awami League-led government followed suit.

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69 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 69 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With the 69 new cases, 17 from outside Dhaka, the total number of dengue patients rose to 1,979, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the patients, 264 are still undergoing treatment.

PRAYER
TIMING

JULY 22

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-15 12-30 5-00 6-54 8-15

JAMAAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A group of students formed a human chain in front of Raju memorial at Dhaka University yesterday, protesting the sexual harassment of and physical assault on a female student on Chittagong University campus on July 17.

PHOTO: STAR