

WAR IN UKRAINE Around 300 North Korean soldiers killed Says Seoul; Kremlin declines to comment on N Korean POWs

AFP, Seoul

Around 300 North Korean soldiers have been killed and 2,700 wounded while fighting in Russia's war against Ukraine, a South Korean lawmaker said yesterday, citing information from Seoul's spy agency.

Seoul has previously claimed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has sent more than 10,000 soldiers as "cannon fodder" to help Moscow fight Kyiv, in return for Russian technical assistance for Pyongyang's heavily sanctioned weapons.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv had captured two North Korean soldiers, releasing video of the injured combatants being interrogated and raising the possibility of a prisoner swap for captured Ukrainian troops.

"The deployment of North Korean troops to Russia has reportedly expanded to include the Kursk region, with estimates suggesting that casualties among North Korean forces have surpassed 3,000," lawmaker Lee Seong-kweon told reporters after a briefing from spy agency. This includes "approximately 300 deaths and 2,700 injuries," Lee said.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin declined to comment on Kyiv saying it had captured North Korean soldiers after Zelensky suggested he was ready to exchange them for Ukrainian POWs.



People displaced by conflict, sheltering at a school, queue to fill up their water containers from a cistern in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli offensive in the Palestinian territory. PHOTO: AFP

CHINA BORDER

India won't trim troops in winter

Says army chief; Modi opens strategic tunnel to China border zones

AGENCIES

India is not looking to reduce the number of troops along the northern frontier in winter, the country's army chief said yesterday adding that it will review summer deployment based on outcome of negotiations with China.

Four years ago, 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed during border clashes following which both sides stopped patrolling several points on the border in Ladakh to avoid new confrontations, while moving tens of thousands of new troops and military equipment closer to the freezing mountainous region.

New Delhi and Beijing reached a deal in October last year to resolve the four-year military stand-off and few days later they

pulled back troops from the disputed border.

"During winter deployment, the number of troops come down. So therefore, at least in the winter strategy, we are not looking forward to any reduction of troops," army chief Upendra Dwivedi told reporters in New Delhi.

Dwivedi said a decision on summer deployment would depend on how negotiations and talks with China progress, reports Reuters.

"When it comes to the summer strategy, we'll take a review based on that time, how many negotiations and meetings have taken place," he said.

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a strategic Himalayan road tunnel yesterday, pushing all-weather access northwards towards contested

high-altitude border zones with rivals China and Pakistan.

The Z. Morh or Sonmarg tunnel, stretching 6.4 kilometres (four miles) beneath a treacherous mountain pass cut off by snow for between four to six months a year, is part of a wider infrastructure drive in border zones, reports AFP.

It helps connect Indian-administered Kashmir with Ladakh, acting as a stepping stone in opening the Srinagar-Leh Highway all year round to allow rapid deployment of military supplies.

India and China share a poorly demarcated border which runs along the Himalayas and has been a source of tension between the neighbours for decades, including a brief but bloody war in 1962.

'India followed all protocols, agreements'

FROM PAGE 1

Nural was accompanied by First Secretary (Political) Alamgir Hossain of the Bangladesh High Commission.

India told Bangladesh that barbed wire fencing, border lighting, installation of technical devices and cattle fences were measures for securing the border, the MEA said in a statement.

"India reiterated its commitment to ensuring a crime-free border by effectively addressing the challenges of cross-border criminal activities, smuggling, movement of criminals and trafficking."

"India conveyed its expectation that all earlier understandings will be implemented by Bangladesh and that there will be a cooperative approach to combating cross-border crimes," the statement said.

Indian envoy Pranay Verma made similar remarks after his meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin on Sunday.

After the meeting, Bangladesh foreign ministry in a statement said the construction of barbed wire fences by the Indian BSF along the Bangladesh-India border "without proper authorisation" undermines the spirit of cooperation and friendly relations between the two nations.

In a separate event at the Secretariat on Sunday, Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retired) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said that tensions arose in five border areas, including Chhapinawabganj, Naogaon, Lalmonirhat, and the Tin Bigha Corridor due to the BSF's recent fencing activities.

However, India has been forced to halt its activities thanks to the strong position of the BGB and locals.

Dhaka will push for the cancellation of any "unequal

agreements" related to Bangladesh-India borders at a director general level meeting of the border forces of the two countries scheduled for February, Jahangir Alam said.

He said four border-related Memorandums of Understanding have been signed between the two countries since Bangladesh's independence, and various issues have risen along the border due to some "unequal agreements" signed during the previous government's tenure.

The four MoUs are the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement for the disposal of enclaves and disputed lands; the Joint Indo-Bangladesh Guidelines for Border Authorities 1975; the Land Boundary Agreement Protocol 2011; and the Coordinated Border Management Plan 2011.

The home adviser said that, of those agreements, the 1975 MoU specifies that no defence development activities can take place within 150 yards of the zero line.

Another MoU states that any development activities cannot occur within the 150 yards of the zero line without mutual consent. Any such work will require prior agreement between the two nations, he said.

He said India has already fenced 3,271km of the 4,156km-long border with Bangladesh, leaving approximately 885km unfenced.

Speaking to The Daily Star, international relations analyst Dr Imtiaz Ahmed said as per international law, no structures can be built within the 150 yards of the border. However, it can be done only if there is consent from both countries sharing the border.

"If Bangladesh now feels it will withdraw the consent, it can. This is a political decision."

Case disposals nearly halved in July-Sept

FROM PAGE 12

according to him.

He suggested reforming the entire judiciary, appointing adequate judges in proportion to the number of cases, and reducing the workload of the judges, who have to take charge of multiple courts and tribunals simultaneously.

The chief justice called for speedy recruitment of skilled manpower to the post of stenographers for assistant and senior assistant judges, and recruitment of staff in all courts of joint district and sessions judges.

Supreme Court lawyer Shishir Manir told The Daily Star in October last year that litigants were losing their trust and confidence in the judiciary because of the backlog of cases.

"We should take measures to immediately increase the number of efficient judges both in the Supreme Court and the lower courts, and appoint adequate supporting staff, such as research officers, stenographers," he said.

"The Supreme Court may rethink the length of vacation days. Miscellaneous cases should be disposed of by constituting special benches. E-judiciary project should be accelerated

and the police should complete investigation at the earliest opportunities," Shishir Manir added.

SC Registrar General Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan declined to comment on the backlog of cases.

RESOLUTION OF MAJOR CASES

On October 20 last year, the Appellate Division disposed of the long pending review petition involving the 16th amendment to the constitution, saying that the Supreme Judicial Council, not parliament, will deal with the allegations against SC judges over incapacity or misconduct.

The Appellate Division on December 10 last year stayed a High Court verdict that declared "Joy Bangla" as the country's national slogan.

The apex court on December 1 stayed a High Court verdict that justified August 15 as National Mourning Day and public holiday.

On December 8, the Appellate Division upheld the High Court verdicts that scrapped all the proceedings of five cases filed against Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus. The cases were filed under the Labour Act in 2019 on charges of illegally terminating some workers of Grameen

Telecommunications. Yunus was the chairman of the organisation that time.

On November 11, the apex court stayed the HC verdict that doubled BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's jail term to 10 years in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

The court on December 10 stayed a HC verdict that sentenced BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman to seven years' imprisonment in a money laundering case and also stayed a lower court judgement that sentenced Tarique's close aide Gias Uddin Al Mamun to seven years in jail.

The Appellate Division on December 2 started hearing the Jamaat-Islami's appeal challenging a HC verdict that scrapped its registration with the Election Commission as a political party.

The top court is expected to conclude the hearing and deliver a verdict soon.

The High Court on December 1 disposed of the two cases filed over the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally. It acquitted Tarique, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the other convicts in the cases.

On October 30, the HC scrapped the trial proceedings of 11 cases filed

against Khaleda over arson, violence, and sedition in 2015.

Earlier on October 23, the HC scrapped four extortion cases filed against Tarique during the regime of the military-backed caretaker government in 2007.

Besides, the High Court on December 17 scrapped a part of the 15th amendment to the constitution that abolished the non-partisan caretaker government system and also restored the provision for holding referendums for amending the constitution.

Meanwhile, the SC has sent its proposals to the law ministry for establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary and formulating a law for the recruitment of SC judges.

On December 19, the HC in a verdict acquitted Babar and five others, who were sentenced to death by the trial court, in a case filed over the sensational 10-truck arms haul in Chattogram in 2004.

Meanwhile, the government has constituted a commission headed by Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, a former Appellate Division judge, to make necessary recommendations in order to bring reforms to the judiciary.

BNP wants nat'l polls by mid-2025

FROM PAGE 1

"The interim government is supposed to hold the national election, not the local government polls," said a standing committee member.

The party also discussed the government's decision to raise VAT and supplementary duties on over 100 goods and services midway through the fiscal year.

During the meeting, BNP leaders expressed frustration over the tax increase, arguing that no elected government would implement measures

that exacerbate public sufferings.

They criticised the hikes in VAT and other taxes, particularly on goods and services integral to daily life and public welfare.

Contacted, Abdul Moyeen Khan, standing committee member of the party, said, "Shall I be wrong if I say that the IMF became a collaborator of the fascist Awami League regime and shored up their collapsing economy by providing a \$4.7 billion loan to sustain an illegitimate government?"

"Moreover, will it be an

overstatement if I ask that are they not planning now to destroy this interim government by forcing them to take an anti-people as well as an illegal economic measure to make them unpopular and lead the country to another mess by misleading the government on the pretext of stabilising the country's financial platform?"

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir called a press conference at the BNP chief's political office in Gulshan today to discuss the outcomes of

the meeting.

The meeting also reviewed the treatment and health condition of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who is undergoing treatment in the UK.

Party leaders expressed gratitude for her gradual recovery. Some leaders noted that her improving health is positive news for the party, adding that she is in good spirits and spending quality time with her family at the hospital.

Khaleda was admitted to the London Clinic on January 8.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chief Adviser's Office
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
Uttara Export Processing Zone
Shangalshi, Nilphamari
(www.bepza.gov.bd)

Ref. No. 03.06.7364.333.33.112.2022-229

Date: 08 January, 2025

Auction Notice

Sealed auctions are hereby invited from the interested National/Foreign Buyers/Companies in order to sell inventoried Machinery Equipment, Finished Goods & other Assets by auction "as and where basis" of terminated Garments manufacturing industry named M/s. Texas Clothing Ltd., SFB-3 (3rd Floor), Uttara EPZ or to operate the enterprise. To participate in the auction the terms & conditions are stated below:

Terms & Conditions:

- Interested Persons/Organizations/ Existing enterprises of EPZ(s) (Local/Joint Venture/Foreign) or any other interested persons/organizations from outside EPZ can take part in this auction who are interested to purchase the Machinery Equipment, Finished Goods & other Assets "as and where basis" of the company by observing the existing rules and regulations in this regard.
- Successful bidder will have to pay VAT, TAX and other payable fees as per custom rules for the duty free imported Assets of existing Assets of industry to be taken out to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
- Auction documents attached with a single pay order/bank draft/FDD from any schedule bank of an amount of 15% as earnest money (non-refundable for successful bidder & refundable for unsuccessful bidder) must be submitted in favour of BEPZA. Auction documents without earnest money will be treated as rejected.
- Inventoried Machineries Equipment, Finished Goods & other Assets under the inventory list may be seen on 16/02/2025 to 18/02/2025 from 10.00 AM to 3.00 PM. Information regarding the visit and the list of Assets may be collected by contacting with the Executive Director, Uttara EPZ directly.
- If the auction is accepted by the Authority, the successful bidder will have to pay the remaining 85% amount of the quoted price along with applicable TAX & VAT within 15 days to BEPZA through Pay Order/Bank Draft/FDD. Accordingly, the delivery of Machineries Equipment, Finished Goods & other Assets will have to be taken as per Customs & BEPZA rules.
- Auction Schedule may be bought by paying Tk. 5,000.00 (non-refundable) within 18/02/2025 during office hours from the Accounts Department of Uttara EPZ, Dhaka EPZ, Chattogram EPZ, Adamjee EPZ, Mongla EPZ, Cumilla EPZ, Karnaphuli EPZ, Ishwardi EPZ & Accounts Department of BEPZA Executive Office, Dhaka.
- Auction schedule may be dropped into the auction box kept at the office of Executive Director, Uttara EPZ on 26/02/2025 from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm and Submitted Auction documents will be opened in the same date at 12:30 pm at the office of Executive Director, Uttara EPZ in presence of the bidders (If any). Updated copy of VAT, TIN and Trade License shall have to be attached with the Auction schedule; but this condition may be relaxed by the Authority in case of fully new 100% foreign owned company interested to invest in the EPZ.
- Persons/Organizations/Investors who are interested to operate the closed industry will get priority in auction.
- Successful bidder will have to take permission to operate the industrial unit in the EPZ by following the project sanctioning procedure of BEPZA as per rules.
- The Authority reserves the right to accept any auction or reject any or all of the submitted auctions without showing any reason. The Authority also reserves the right to cancel the Auction and accordingly take next action if the desired rates are not obtained.

(Mohammad Abdul Jabbar)
Executive Director (IC)
Phone: 02-588819002
e-mail: ed.uepz@bepza.gov.bd