

Bangladeshi shot dead ‘by Indians’ at Sylhet border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An 18-year-old Bangladeshi was shot dead allegedly by some Khasi people on the Indian side of the border across Sylhet’s Kanaighat upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shakil Ahmed of Momtajganj Prantichhara area.

Lieutenant Colonel Md Zubayer Anwar, commanding officer of the Zakiganj Battalion of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), confirmed the incident, citing Shakil’s companions.

Quoting them, the BGB official said Shakil was shot by the Khasi people about 500 metres inside Indian territory around 5:00pm after he, along with several others, had crossed the border illegally.

They entered the Indian side to collect and smuggle betel nuts, said Abdul Awal, officer-in-charge of Kanaighat Police Station.

His companions carried him back to the Bangladesh side, but he died on the way to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, the police officer said.

An autopsy will be conducted at the medical college, the OC added.



Visiting Chairman of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza pays a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

PHOTO: PID

‘Pakistan keen on strengthening ties’

Its Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee chairman tells Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, visiting chairman of Pakistan’s Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, paid a courtesy call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna on Saturday.

During the meeting, they discussed a wide range of issues concerning Bangladesh-Pakistan relations, including growing importance of bilateral trade, investment, and defence cooperation, said the chief adviser’s press wing.

Emphasising the shared historical, cultural, and people-to-people ties between the two countries, General Mirza expressed Pakistan’s desire to strengthen cooperation in multiple sectors. He noted the vast potential for expanding trade, connectivity, and investment between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

“Our two countries will support each other,” General Mirza said, adding that a two-way shipping route between Karachi and Chattogram has already begun operations, while a Dhaka-Karachi air route is expected to open within months.

Both sides also underscored the need to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East and Europe. They exchanged views on the growing challenge of misinformation and the misuse of social media by non-state actors to undermine peace and stability across various regions.

“Fake news and disinformation have flooded social media. It is being used to sow chaos. There must be a concerted global effort to combat this menace,” Prof Yunus remarked.

National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman, Senior Secretary and SDG Coordinator Lamiya Morshed, and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Imran Haider were present during the meeting.

Advisory council

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is going to announce the minimum wage for journalists by next week and is working on formulating ordinances to protect journalists’ rights and regulations for private television channels and OTT platforms.

He said the rate of government advertisements in the media will be doubled, with the condition of implementing a minimum basic salary for working journalists. “A journalist’s salary of Tk 12,000–15,000 is unacceptable.”

Announcing that the actual circulation of newspapers will be published soon, Mahfuj said the irregularities of falsifying the circulation numbers must stop.

“We want to increase benefits for the existing media outlets. We will increase the advertisement rate from public funds, but in return, we want ethical journalism and better pay for journalists.”

If journalists are not given this basic salary, the benefits will not be extended for that particular outlet, Mahfuj said. “Low pay creates a moral crisis for journalists.”

“We’ve completed a list of the newspapers that are not published regularly or use the same content under different names. If you [journalists] give us your support, we will take action against them.”

“Our goal is not to shut down media... rather, we want new media to emerge and create competition. The good will survive in the market, and the poor will be left behind,” Mahfuj said, urging media companies to improve reporting quality and good content to remain competitive.

Replying to a query, Mahfuj said, “A permanent media commission’s work will be extensive, which may interfere with the work under several divisions of the ministry... We will have our recommendation for the elected government,” he added.

Army recovers

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searched a specific coach of the train and recovered the items, the ISPR said.

No casualties or damage occurred during the operation, it added.

“The weapons and explosives were handed over to Dhaka Railway Police Station, and legal steps are underway,” said Jaynal Abedin, officer-in-charge of the station.

What will this

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Azad was from Shariatpur’s Naria upazila. Azad finished his studies at Jagannath University. He was working at a travel agency in Dhaka’s Uttara. His family lives in Chashara, Narayanganj.

Azad’s brother-in-law, Sohag Ahmed, said, “Azad was in Malaysia for some time. He got married six years ago and started a family here.”

Azad’s body was found between metro rail pillars 432 and 433. Two others were injured in the incident. Azad was carrying his passport, which helped identify him.

Talking to our Shariatpur correspondent, Azad’s cousin, Abdul Gani Chowdkar, said, “I heard that an adviser of the interim government announced Tk 5 lakh as compensation for Azad’s death. What will this Tk 5 lakh do? This can never be compensation for a human life.”

“For work purposes, he regularly commuted from Narayanganj to Farmgate.”

“My brother has a four-year-old son named Mohammad Abdullah and a three-year-old daughter named Suraiya Akhter. How will his wife take care of these two children alone?” he asked.

Through journalists, he wanted to make a request to the government, “Please ensure a good future for Azad’s children. The government must take their responsibility.”

Metro’s 2nd pad fall rings alarm

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[bearing pad] bounce off the street and strike the man [Azad] on the neck from behind,” she told this correspondent at the scene.

“He [Azad] immediately collapsed on the pavement, and blood started coming out of his nose and mouth... He went silent within seconds.”

After hitting Azad, the bearing pad bounced again and hit a nearby shop, shattering its glass, she added.

According to officials of Tejgaon Police Station, both of the injured received primary treatment.

Visiting the site, Road Transport and Bridges Ministry Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said a five-member committee has been formed to investigate whether the accident resulted from a technical fault or sabotage. The committee has been instructed to submit its report within two weeks.

He added that the family of the deceased will receive Tk 5 lakh, and an eligible family member will be offered a job at the DMTCL. The government will also bear the treatment costs of the injured.

The Agargaon-Karwan Bazar portion of the country’s first metro rail line was constructed by a Japan-Bangladesh joint venture comprising Takken Corporation, Abdul Monem Ltd, and Abenikko.

EXPERTS, OFFICIALS SAY

DMTCL Managing Director Faruk Ahmed said the bearing pad may have fallen due to jerking of the line caused by train movement, though the exact cause will be determined through investigation. He added that there might be a construction issue or a design flaw, but this cannot be confirmed without a thorough probe.

Responding to a question, he said corrective measures were taken following the previous incident, but yesterday’s occurrence will be thoroughly examined to assess whether it resulted from a design flaw

or other underlying issues.

Contacted by The Daily Star last night, transport expert Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet said two such incidents in quick succession strongly suggest a compromise in the metro system’s construction.

“The design was made considering all possible risks, and this science has matured globally over a hundred years. The design followed those standards – so the issue likely lies in the construction.

“It’s too early for a bearing pad to fall due to a lack of maintenance.”

He added that the consultants brought in from Japan to oversee construction may not have done their job properly.

“We must conduct an independent safety audit of all vulnerable components across the entire 21km line. If we don’t, the fear that has emerged among the public will only grow.”

Another senior civil engineer of a government agency said elastomeric bearings are generally installed on pier caps without mechanical anchorage, relying on the compressive force from the superstructure’s dead load to generate adequate friction and resist lateral movement under service conditions.

“Any instance of bearing displacement on a metro rail viaduct warrants a thorough forensic investigation to identify the underlying cause – whether from unexpected loading, poor specification, material degradation, or design deficiencies,” he said, seeking anonymity.

Abdul Baquee Miah, director (Planning and Development) of DMTCL and head of the probe committee formed after the previous incident, said they had made several recommendations, and some corrective measures were implemented.

“But I don’t know whether all of

our recommendations were carried out.”

QUESTIONS OVER PROBE BODY

Some experts and engineers have questioned the neutrality of the probe committee, noting that Bridges Division Secretary Mohammad Abdur Rouf was appointed as its chief.

They pointed out that Rouf was serving as the managing director of DMTCL when the previous incident occurred and was later promoted to secretary of the Bridges Division under the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry in February this year.

Brig Gen (ret’d) Md Abdul Wohab, the current project director of Mass Rapid Transit Line-6, was made a member of the committee, while Asfia Sultana, deputy secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division, will serve as member secretary.

The two other members of the committee are Prof ABM Toufique Hasan of Buet’s mechanical engineering department and Lt Col Md Jahidul Islam, associate professor of civil engineering at the Military Institute of Science and Technology.

Prof Shamsul Hoque said there would be a significant lack of neutrality in the committee, as it was formed with the former managing director and representatives from the ministry and the company as members.

Asked about the matter, Adviser Fouzul said appointing Rouf as the committee head would not affect neutrality, as external members had also been included.

“Besides, Rouf was not managing director of DMTCL when the line was constructed,” he said.

However, when this correspondent pointed out that Rouf was the company secretary during the construction, the adviser said, “I don’t think so,” adding, “We will be monitoring the investigation, so there will be no issue.”

Commission may ask govt to issue order

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recommendations on implementing the charter.

“The commission hopes to submit the recommendations to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus by tomorrow [today].”

The commission plans to hold another meeting in the morning to finalise the recommendations and submit them to the chief adviser by afternoon.

Legal experts consulted by the commission yesterday opined that once approved in the referendum, implementation of the reform proposals would become mandatory for the next parliament.

The commission is prioritising this approach, though it is still considering whether any additional guarantees can be provided.

Contacted, one of the legal experts consulted by the commission told this newspaper yesterday that the draft order clearly states that within 270 days, the necessary measures must be taken to implement the proposed reforms, thus imposing an obligation for the next parliament.

“However, we haven’t specified what will happen if it’s not done. There were discussions on the matter, but no final decision has been made,” said the expert, adding, “It’s very

difficult to predict what may or may not happen in future.”

Commission sources said the implementation order will contain the full text of the 84 reform proposals as an annex, with some provisions taking effect immediately. Others will be activated later, with specific timelines mentioned for each clause. Half of these 84 proposed reforms require constitutional changes.

Among the key proposals under discussion is the introduction of a bicameral parliamentary system. The commission prefers that the new structure be adopted within the next parliament’s term, though the mechanism for creating an upper house before completing the constitutional reform remains unresolved.

If the referendum is held on the same day as the national election and the reforms are approved, political parties will be required to publish candidate lists for the upper house within 15 days of forming the lower house.

Despite broad consensus on holding a referendum, disagreements remain among the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and the National Citizen Party (NCP) over its timing, legal framework, and the handling of dissenting views.

BNP and Jamaat are among the

25 parties that have signed the July charter. The NCP, formed by student leaders of last year’s July uprising, and four leftist parties have yet to sign.

MEETING WITH MARTYRS’ FAMILIES

Representatives of the families of those killed in the July uprising met the commission yesterday at the LD Hall of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. The families called for a strong legal foundation for the charter and immediate measures to ensure their safety and dignity.

They told the commission that the ideals for which their children sacrificed their lives remain unfulfilled and that they continue to face humiliation and deprivation in government offices.

The commission members acknowledged that they were unaware of the families’ ongoing struggles and assured them that their concerns would be conveyed to the relevant authorities.

The 10-member delegation included Shahidul Islam Bhuiyan, father of Shaheed Farhan Faiyaz; Mir Mostafizur Rahman, father of Shaheed Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mughdh; and Md Mohiuddin, father of Shaheed Shykh Aashhabul Yamin.

Rally behind the chosen or face consequences

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for each constituency. Tarique joined via video conferencing from London.

Nomination seekers from Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet, and Rajshahi divisions have been invited for meetings today.

During the meeting with leaders from Chattogram and Rangpur yesterday, Tarique delivered a nearly 40-minute speech, while Standing Committee members Jamiruddin Sircar, Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Salahuddin Ahmed spoke among others.

Salahuddin warned that if the aspirants do not accept the party’s decision, they will face strict action, according to Sheikh Md Mohiuddin, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-1 constituency.

“At that time, Tarique Rahman stated that Salahuddin is correct, but he [Tarique] does not want expulsion to be the only solution,” Mohiuddin told The Daily Star.

Najmul Mostafa Amin, who is seeking nomination for Chattogram-15, said, “Tarique Rahman told us that he will be forced to take organisational action if anyone goes against the party’s decision; but he does not want to do this, and does not like it.”

Mostafizur Rahman, who is seeking nomination for Chattogram-13, also said Tarique and other central leaders warned them against not supporting the candidates chosen by the party.

At the meeting, Tarique also instructed those getting the party ticket not to hurt others’ feelings by celebrating or distributing sweets in their areas once they get the confirmation.

The nominated individual must visit the homes of those who missed out on the ticket and seek their cooperation in the polls campaign, Chattogram South District BNP

Convener M Idris Mia said, citing Tarique.

The upcoming election will be challenging, and everyone must work unitedly to secure victory for the paddy sheaf symbol, said Idris, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-1.

“We have been given the message to love the party like our own child and mother,” said Belayet Hussain, former joint convener of Chattogram North BNP.

If the party can come to power in the future, everyone will have the opportunity to be established within the party, said Belayet, a nomination seeker from Chattogram-3.

Earlier, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that the party will evaluate those who do not receive nominations.

Nurul Amin, former joint convener of the Chattogram North District unit and a nomination seeker from Chattogram-1, said, “To save the country and the party, there is no option but to win the upcoming election for BNP. For this, we must all remain united.”

At a separate meeting with nomination seekers from Cumilla (proposed), Faridpur (proposed) and Mymensingh divisions, Tarique said that the BNP aims to engage in politics with all parties, and for this reason, party leaders must work in that direction.

At the end of the meeting, the leaders raised their hands and pledged to support the candidates nominated by the party.

“People have trust in BNP. In his speech, Tarique Rahman asked us to maintain this trust, no controversial step should be taken. We have all committed to working for the candidates nominated by the party,” said Aminur Rashid Yasin, a nomination seeker from Cumilla-6.

‘It’s up to the army’

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Tamim made the remark while briefing journalists on the day’s ICT-1 proceedings, which included deferring hearings in the three cases involving 32 accused, including the 15 officers.

Under a recent amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act, 1973, anyone formally charged in such cases is automatically disqualified from holding or contesting public office, even before the tribunal takes cognisance.

The tribunal rescheduled hearings in the two enforced disappearance cases to November 23, instead of November 20, and fixed November 24 for the Rampura killings case, previously set for November 5, following prosecution petitions seeking more time for preparation and citing personnel problems.

Deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her former defence adviser, Major General (ret’d) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, are accused in both the enforced disappearance cases.

On October 8, the tribunal issued arrest warrants against 32 accused – including 25 serving and retired army officers – after taking cognisance of the formal charges. Fifteen of the officers were produced before the court on October 22.

Meanwhile, the tribunal granted a two-month extension for the ICT

investigation agency to submit its report in another crimes against humanity case against Hasina and Major General (relieved) Ziaul Ahsan over enforced disappearances. The next hearing was set for December 11.

Prosecutor Tamim said the agency had informed the prosecution that the probe was nearing completion.

In another development, the ICT-1 rejected a bail petition filed for former officer-in-charge of Konabari Police Station, KM Ashraf, accused in a case over the killing of 20-year-old college student Hridoy on August 5 last year.

Videos circulated on social media show police shooting Hridoy from point-blank range as several law enforcers surrounded him at Konabari in Gazipur before dragging his body towards the nearby police station.

According to the prosecution, his body was dumped in a river in the area, and it has not yet been found.

The tribunal’s investigation agency is currently probing the case.

Defence counsel sought bail on humanitarian grounds, citing that Ashraf’s wife has cancer and recently underwent surgery, requiring his presence. The prosecution opposed the plea, arguing that the ICT Act provides no scope for bail. After hearing both sides, the tribunal rejected the petition.