

Two Bangladeshi shot wounds by the BSF at the Tentulia border under Panchagar District

Fact-finding
Odhikar

Name of the Victim : Nazrul Islam

Age : 34

Father's Name : Late Samar Ali

Name of the Victim : Anwar Hossain

Age : 26

Father's Name : Late Sukur Ali

Address : District: Panchagar, Police Station: Tentulia, Union:
Tentulia, Village: Dorjibari

Border/Pillar (Bangladesh) : Tentulia Kazipara Border/ Main Pillar No: 442, Sub Pillar 6

Border/ Pillar (India) : Haptia Border/ Main Pillar No: 442, Sub Pillar 6

Date of Occurrence : 6 January 2010



Photo of Nazrul Islam



Photo of Anwar Hossain

On 6 January 2010 at around 3 am, the victims Nazrul Islam (34) and Anwar Hossain (26) along with 10 persons went to Tentulia Kazipara border in Panchagar District and crossed the main pillar no 442, sub-pillar 6. While they were at Haptia Indian border, suddenly the BSF troops started firing at them. Around 30/40 gun shots were fired that night by the BSF. Among these shots one hit Nazrul Islam's right hand and another shot hit Anwar Hossain's right palm.

On that night of 6 January 2010 Nazrul and Anwar escaped from the hands of the BSF and took shelter in the houses of Indian cattle merchants. Nazrul had a terrible injury in his hand and needed an operation, which was done in Shiliguri Hospital in India. He had undergone much harassment and stayed in India for more than 2 weeks. Anwar also stayed in India for 3 days. During their stay, they said they received very little treatment for their injuries.

During the course of their stay, their family members did not inform the BDR or police station about them being missing. That is why, the BDR could not tell Odhikar anything about this incident. They did not maintain any record for these injury cases.

Odhikar conducted a fact-finding mission into the incident on 25 March, 2010. During the fact-finding mission, Odhikar spoke with:

- The victims and their family
- Local residents
- Concerned members of the BDR
- Concerned police officers

Nazrul Islam's statement

Nazrul Islam (34) is a rickshaw van puller living in the village of Dorjipara under Tentulia Upazila in Panchagar District. He lives with his wife, mother and two children. When Odhikar went to see him, he was not interested in giving the interview. Later Nazrul told Odhikar that he occasionally goes to India to fetch cattle by crossing the Indian border.

The day before the incident on 5 January 2010, Nazrul Islam did not go out of the house till evening and did not drive his rickshaw van either. At 6.00 pm he told his wife that he would go to India to bring back cows. At 6.30 pm he along with Ranju, Shahidul and Anwar met at the Puran Tentulia bazaar where they made plans. On 5 January 2010 around 9.30 pm they went to the north western Tentulia Kazipara border through which they would enter India. The place located near a forest on the other side was the BSF Haptia camp. There they saw an unusually

large number of BSF troops and they returned to the bazaar and had tea. Again at around 3.00 am on 6 January 2010, they tried to cross the Indian border through the same place. While passing a field they did not notice some BSF soldiers hidden there. As soon as the BSF saw them, they started firing. According to Nazrul, on that night the BSF shot at least 30 rounds and he had never experienced such firing from the BSF before. Hearing the sound of firing, all of them scattered to save their lives. Nazrul started running towards India. He got shot in his right hand.

Nazrul said that after he had got shot he went directly to an Indian cattle trader's house, whose name he did not disclose. In the mean time the BSF were roaming around in search of him. While staying in India he phoned one of his cousins named Jasim living at Sonapur in India and told him to take him from the merchant's house. Jasim came to the merchant's house at around 8.00 am on 6 January 2010 and took Nazrul home on a motor bike. On reaching Sonapur his cousin Jasim called a local doctor who gave Nazrul some treatment and put a bandage on the wound.

Nazrul stayed at his cousin's house the whole day of 6 January 2010. In the meantime his cousin Jasim rented a car for 3000 rupees to transfer him to Shiliguri. At around 2.00 am on 7 January 2010, Nazrul, along with the driver named Salam Bihari, went to Shiliguri. As the BSF members were desperately looking for him, they did not use any main roads. At around 7.30 pm of that day Nazrul reached Shiliguri and he stayed there at the house of Salam Bihari.

On 9 January 2010, Salam Bihari admitted Nazrul to the Shiliguri Hospital and borne the expense of 29,000 Indian Rupees which cost for the operation on Nazrul's hand. According to Nazrul, he stayed for 12 days in Shiliguri Hospital. In the mean time, the doctor who operated on him, came to know that he was a Bangladeshi and threatened Nazrul that if he did not give 35,000 Indian Rupees more, he would inform the BSF of his whereabouts. Being frightened, Nazrul called Salam Bihari who suggested him to abscond from the hospital. On the night of 21 January 2010 Nazrul gave money to a guard of the hospital to bring food for him. Later Nazrul absconded from the Shiliguri Hospital.

After leaving Shiliguri Hospital on 21 January 2010, Nazrul had no money left; he started roaming here and there on the roads of Shiliguri bazaar. At night with the help of a rickshaw puller he called some of his known cattle traders, whose name Nazrul did not disclose. The

cattle traders brought him by car to near the Haptia camp and finally on 22 January 2010 at 3.30 am he entered the Tentulia Kazipara border of Bangladesh and reached home.

Asma Khatun (23), wife of Nazrul Islam

Asma khatun informed Odhikar that on 5 January 2010 her husband told her that he would not drive his rickshaw van that day and would rather go for cattle trading at night. Though she forbade him persistently, he did not listen to her. He took his meal for the day and went out at around 5.30 pm.

On 6 January 2010 at 6.30 am she came to know that her husband had been shot by the BSF and he did not return from India. After hearing that, she along with her brother named Zakaria went to the BDR camp at 8.00 am.

On 6 January 2010, Asma received a call from Nazrul from Sonapur in India at 10.00 pm. Nazrul told her that he had a gun shot in the right hand and she was also told not to file any missing person's case. She informed that Nazrul returned home on 22 January 2010 at around 4.00 am.

Budhi Bewa (55), Nazrul's mother

Budhi Bewa, mother of Nazrul Islam, said that she saw her son on 5 January 2010 taking his meal and talking to his wife. She also heard him saying that he would cross the Indian border that night. She urged Nazrul not to go to India but he did not heed her. Nazrul did not return home that night.

In the morning of 6 January 2010 at around 7.00 she heard that Nazrul had been shot by the BSF and had fled to India. She heard this from Nazrul's wife Asma. When Nazrul gave a call from Sonapur in India she talked with him. Nazrul assured her that he was safe and he would return home soon.

She stated that on 22 January her son returned home early in the morning. On his return she saw that Nazrul's right hand was badly wounded and bandaged.

Anwar Hossain's statement

Anwar Hossain is also a rickshaw van puller, living in Dorjibari village. He lives there with his wife, one son and one daughter. His mother, three sisters and two brothers are also live with

him. He said that on 5 January 2010 at 6.30 pm he, Nazrul and Ranju along with other 8 persons gathered at Puran Tentulia bazaar. At 9.30 pm they went near the Haptia borderline at the Indian side to check the overall situation and they found it quite risky. They waited there about 2.5 hours and then they returned to the bazaar. There they were in dilemma, but they had no intension to cancel their plans to enter into India. Instead they preferred waiting. At 3.00 am on 6 January 2010 they proceeded to cross the jungle on the other side where the BSF camp was.

While they were crossing the Indian border, Anwar saw that a BSF soldier had spotted them. Anwar and his group did not notice the soldiers on the ground. No sooner had the BSF troops seen them, they started firing and all of them scattered. Among them Anwar shot in his right palm. He told Odhikar that he did not see Nazrul getting shot. He along with Shahidul and Aslam started running together towards a Tea Estate in Indian Territory. In the meantime the BSF troops went out from the camp in search of them. They had to wait till 4.00 am. When the BSF traced them to the garden they started to run towards another tea garden. They took shelter in the tea garden from where Anwar called one of the Indian cattle traders, named Gopal. In the morning of 6 January, that cattle trader sent his wife to take him to their house. At 6 am Anwar reached that cattle trader's house where he found Ranju from their group.

After staying there for a while, he was taken to a doctor who put a bandage to his wound and gave him medicine. He stayed at that house on 6 and 7 January 2010. Anwar talked with his family on 6 January. On 8 January he went to Daspara with Ranju. He took some medical treatment at Daspara. At 6 pm on 8 January, the BSF traced them staying at Gopal's house. They escaped. After some time, the house owner gave him some money to cross the border. They started to enter into Bangladesh at 7.30 pm. They went Sonapur first, and then Shiliguri through Banglabandha 'zero point'. On 9 January at around 3 am they were able to enter into Bangladesh.

Morjan Begum (20), wife of Anwar Hossain

Morjan Begum told Odhikar that on 5 January at 5 pm her husband went out from the house telling her that he would be late to return. Anwar revealed that he would be going to India with others. Even though Morjan Begum forbade him, he did not pay heed to it and said that he needed money. At 6 am on 6 January 2010, she came to know that the BSF were shooting at those who were crossing the Indian border and many were missing. Hearing this she became worried and tried to find out Anwar's whereabouts. She did not, however, go to the BDR camp.

On 7 January 2010 at 8.30 am she received a call from Anwar who told her that he would return home as soon as possible. He also told her that he got a gun shot wound in his palm. She told Odhikar that if she had gone to the BDR camp, the BDR would have arrested her husband on his return. She told that on January 9 at 3.30 am Anwar returned home. She saw him wearing a bandage around his palm.

Mohammad Shahidul (29), witness

In an interview, Shahidul shared his experience with Odhikar. He said that on 5 January 2010, he was planning to bring cattle across the Indian border. On 6 January at 3.00 am they made an attempt to intrude the Indian border (Haptia Border camp, main pillar 442, and sub pillar 6). They were 13 in number, including Nazrul and Anwar. While crossing the border they did not notice the BSF troops but suddenly they were attacked. Shahidul stated that around 30-40 rounds of shots were fired by the BSF. While escaping, he saw one bullet hit Anwar's palm. It was too dark to see anything else. Later, he came to know that Nazrul was also hit. Shahidul said that he along with Anwar and Aslam were all together while escaping from the BSF. They ran towards India and took shelter in the tea garden where they stayed till 4.00 am. They called one of their known cattle merchants, named Gopal. They went to Gopal's house at 6.00 am on 6 January 2010. They met with another group mate, Ranju at the same place. Shahidul said that Anwar was treated for his wounds by a local doctor. On 8 January at 6.00 pm, the BSF traced their presence at Gopal's house and they again escaped from that place. At 7.30 pm Gopal gave them some money to go back to Bangladesh. They went to Sonapur, then Shiliguri and entered into Bangladesh through Banglabandha 'zero point' at 3 am on 9 January 2010.

Nayek Subedar Abu Bakar Siddique, Camp Commander, Tentulia BDR Camp

Nayek Subedar Abu Bakar Siddique informed Odhikar that Nipen Chandra was camp in charge when the incident took place. He said that the BDR did not receive any information about the case of Nazrul Islam and Anwar Hossain who were shot by the BSF on 6 January 2010. Furthermore, this was a police case, the BDR had nothing to do in this regard.

Norendranath Sarkar, Officer-in-Charge, Tentulia Police station

On being asked by Odhikar about the incident the Officer-in-Charge could not say anything substantive about the incident of the night of 6 January 2010. Neither the victims' families nor the BDR had given them any information regarding this matter.

-End of Report-