



BSF firing injures three farmers, Setaur, Abu Sayem and Saidul at Unishbighi border in Chapainawabganj

*Fact Finding Report*

*Odhikar*

On October 7, 2012 at around 7:30am Mohammad Setaur Rahman (54) and Mohammad Abu Sayem (33), both sons of late Mohammad Ilias Uddin and late Mosammot Golmahata Begum of Unishbighi village of Shibganj Upazila in Chapainawabganj district along with Mohammad Saidul Islam (35) son of Mohammad Farzan Ali and Mosammot Hanefa Begum were plucking weeds in a paddy field adjacent to the border when officials of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) entered Bangladesh through Unishbighi border and shot at Setaur, Abu Sayem and Saidul, wounding them in the process, their families claimed.

Mohammad Abu Sayem and Setaur Rahman are brothers and farmers by profession. Their land is 50 yards to the west of border pillar 182/3. When they were cleaning the weeds in the field, around 7/8 BSF officials of 20th battalion of Naoda BSF camp in Maldah district of India suddenly entered through the Bangladesh border. They spotted Setaur, Sayem and Saidul and wanted to take them to the Indian territory and detain them. At that time suddenly the BSF officials shot at them due to which they got wounded.

Odhikar carried out a fact finding mission into the incident. During the incident Odhikar interviewed:

- Victims Abu Sayem, Saidul Islam and Setaur Rahman
- Eyewitness
- The doctor who treated Abu Sayem and Saidul and
- Members of the law enforcement agencies



Photo: From left: (1) Mohammad Abu Sayem on the hospital bed with his left leg amputated (2) Mohammad Saidul Islam, who was shot on his foot and (3) Wounded Setaur Rahman

**Mohammad Saidul Islam (35), victim of BSF firing:**

Mohammad Saidul Islam informed Odhikar that on October 7, 2012 at around 7:30am Setaur, Sayem and he were working at field 1009 in Ajmotpur Mouja adjacent to Unishbighi border of Shibganj Upazila. Suddenly 7/8 BSF members opened the barbed-wire gate at the border and trespassed into their field, some 200 yards away from the zero-point of the border. The BSF personnel accused them of smuggling alcoholic substances i.e. Phensidyl from India at night on October 6, 2012. They said that they came to detain them and take them to India. Saidul told the BSF officials that they are farmers and they were not involved in any other affairs. Setaur, Sayem and he have been working on the field, plucking weeds since 6:00am and they have never gone to the border to smuggle Phensidyl from India. As the farmers got into an argument with the BSF officials, the latter fired a few blanks to scare them. Sayem, Setaur and Saidul screamed for help from the villagers. After hearing cries and the sound of gunshots some of the villagers came to their rescue. The BSF officials fired a few rounds pointing at their feet, subsequently injuring Sayem, Setaur and Saidul. About 40 BSF members entered 500 yards inside Bangladesh from the barbed-wire fence. They retreated as the villagers came forward to defend the farmers.

**Mohammad Abu Sayem (33), victim of BSF firing:**

Mohammad Abu Sayem told Odhikar that on October 7, 2012 at around 7:30am he was removing weeds from his paddy field. Shortly, he noticed that about 7/8 BSF members, of Naoda BSF camp's 20th battalion of Maldah in India, entering Bangladesh through Unishbighi border. They entered Bangladesh and wanted to take Saidul, Setaur and him to India on false charges. They were being accused of being involved with smuggling drugs. As they entered in a verbal argument with the BSF, the Indian border security members fired a few blanks. Hearing their screams and the sound of gunshots, villagers gathered to rescue them. Sayem ran towards his home. The BSF initially chased him and later fired at him. The bullet hit his left knee, leaving him seriously injured. The villagers brought a bleeding Sayem home and soon took him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for treatment. The doctors at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital operated on him and took out a bullet from his left knee. On October 8, 2012 at around 3:00am he was moved to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in Dhaka from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. The doctors there amputated his left leg. While still undergoing treatment at home, Sayem told Odhikar that BSF members often enter Bangladesh drunken and harass villagers. They verbally abuse anyone they find and even try abducting people.



**Photo:** Circle (1) The place through which the BSF entered Bangladesh. (2) The watch tower of BSF at the border. (3) The place where the flag meeting between BSF and BGB was held. (Photo courtesy: Odhikar, date: October 9, 2012.)

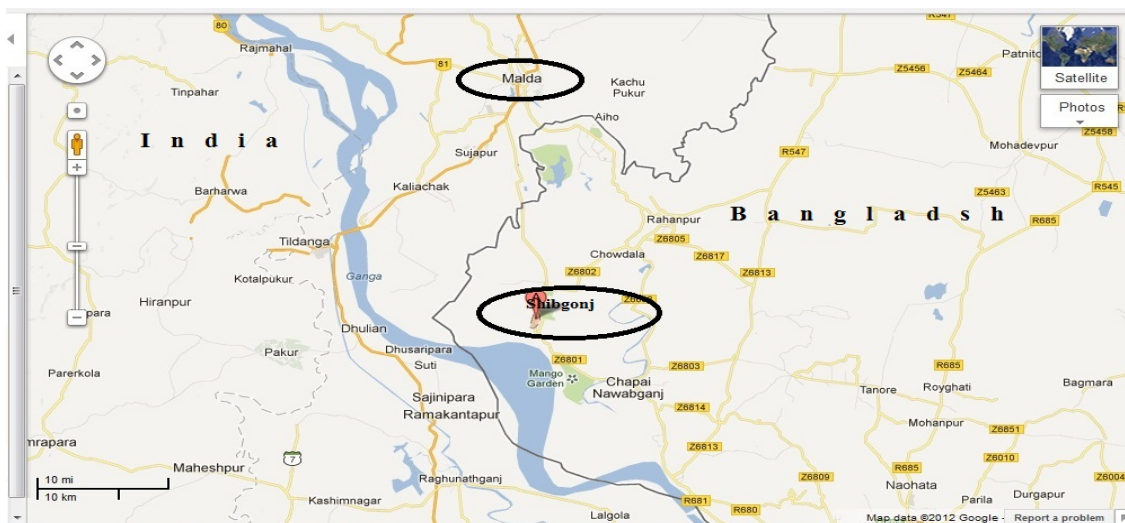


**Photo:** The arrow on the photo indicates the path through which the BSF entered Unishbighi village on October 7, 2012. (Photo : Odhikar, date: October 9, 2012.)

### **Mohammad Arshadul Islam (30), eyewitness:**

Mohammad Arshadul Islam informed Odhikar that on October 7, 2012 at around 7:30am, he was working on his paddy field near border pillar 182/3. Sayem, Setaur and Saidul were working on their field in Ajmotpur Mouja's land 1009, about 50 yards north of his paddy field. He saw some 7/8 BSF members entering Bangladesh through the barbed-wire fence, about 150 yards west of border pillar 182/3. The BSF men called Saidul, Setaur and Sayem and were talking to them. Soon the BSF members were swearing at them quite loudly and all of a sudden chased them and opened fire at them. Arshadul informed the Commander of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB)'s Chokpara Border Outpost Subedar Mohammad Shamsul Alam about this matter on mobile phone. Saidul screamed out that the BSF officials were taking them away. Upon hearing Saidul's screams and the sound of gunshots, villagers came running to the scene of incident. In the meantime, 30/40 more BSF men entered Bangladesh through the barbed wire fence, trespassing 500 yards inside Bangladesh and ran to pick a fight with the villagers. The BSF officials fired at the farmers aiming at their legs which wounded Sayem, Setaur and Saidul.





**Photo:** The area circled on the top is Maldah district of India and the circled area on the bottom is Shibganj Thana of Bangladesh.



**Photo:** The Battalion Commander level meeting between BSF and BGB officials regarding the issue at the Bangladesh Shona Masjid inland port C and F Agent's Association's conference room

**Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Monjurul Alam, 9 Border Guard Bangladesh, Chapainawabganj:**

Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Monjurul Alam informed Odhikar that on October 7, 2012 at around 7:45am he learnt from Chokpara BGB border outpost's Commander Subedar Mohammad Shamsul Alam that BSF officials entered Unishbighi village and opened fire. He ordered Subedar Alam to go inspect the area and arrange a flag meeting. A meeting was held between BGB and BSF's battalion commander level at Shona Masjid border of Chapainawabganj on October 8, 2012 at around 12:15pm in order to secure a peaceful environment at the Bangladesh-India border. The meeting was led by 46 Border Guard Battalion's captain Lieutenant Colonel Shams on behalf of BGB. Commandant Arbin Gildial of 20 battalion of India's Maldah sector led BSF at the meeting. In the meeting they discussed matters related to preventing smuggling and alcohol trafficking and stopping border killings. Moreover, both sides agreed upon

maintaining a peaceful environment at the border. At the meeting, 43 Border Guard Battalion's Commander Lieutenant Colonel Anowar and other high officials of BGB and BSF were present.

**Dr. Azizul Haque Sweet, Assistant Surgeon, Upazila Healthcare and Family Welfare Complex, Shibganj, Chapainawabganj:**

Dr. Azizul Haque Sweet told Odhikar that on October 7, 2012 at around 8:50am, a man named Nazrul Islam brought Saidul Islam to the emergency department of Upazila Health Complex. He bandaged the wound on top of his right foot.

**Dr. Riyad, Clinical Assistant, National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka:**

Dr. Riyad told Odhikar that on October 8, 2012 at around 3:00pm when Abu Sayem was brought to the emergency department of National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation he was first referred to the National Heart Foundation. After examination there he was brought back to NITOR. As Sayem was shot in his left leg, the blood supply in that area had stopped. His left leg had to be amputated from the knee as a result.

**Odhikar's view:**

Odhikar expresses grave concern over the firing on farmers Abu Sayem, Setaur and Saidul by BSF officials. Bangladeshi citizens live in constant insecurity and risk at the Bangladesh-India border. Odhikar demands that the government send an official protest to the Indian government regarding the shooting of Abu Sayem, Setaur and Saidul by BSF officials and arrange for their proper treatment. Odhikar believes that it is because of weak foreign policy of the government that the people residing near the border are regularly being subject to torture, killing and kidnapping. Odhikar again urges the government to take a firm stance to protect the Bangladeshi citizens living in the border regions.

-End of Report-