

Bashundhara case

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The court dismissed the case after holding hearing on it.

The court said it dismissed the case on the ground that it was not specified which parts of the report published in the Daily Prothom Alo had defamed Bashundhara Group.

Latifur Rahman, in the case, was mentioned as the publisher of the Prothom Alo although he is not the publisher of the leading Bangla daily of the country.

Earlier on Tuesday night and Wednesday, Bashundhara Group tried to file a fabricated case against eight people including Matiur Rahman, Latifur Rahman and the Editor of the Samakal Golam Sarwar and its publisher AK Azad.

At the beginning, Bashundhara Group put pressure on police to file a case but police refused to record the complaint as a case because the allegations were not found authentic. Later they recorded it as a general diary.

Having been failed to record it as a case, they communicated with government high-ups to put pressure on the police.

Finally Bashundhara Group yesterday filed the case with the court of judicial magistrate Sharif Arafat in Dhaka.

The complainant of the defamation case in the case statement said the chairman of Bashundhara had been defamed socially, commercially and politically because of the report published on the daily Prothom Alo on May 8 and October 12 this year.

Through the untrue and derogatory remarks and cartoon the Bashundhara Group chairman has been defamed. Therefore, the businessmen involved in the Bashundhara Steel and Engineering Ltd has lost their interests in all kinds of commercial exchanges and investments and the institution incurred a financial loss of Tk 500 crore.

The victim went to the South Keraniganj police station to lodge a case in this regard but he was advised to file the case with the court.

Judicial magistrate Shahriar Arafat in the order of dismissal said that there is no specific information of allegation of tarnishing the name and fame of anybody. Besides, it is not clear which parts of the reports carried by the daily Prothom Alo have defamed the complainant.

The order said it was not mentioned in the case statement which parts of the

UN presses Israel and Palestinians on war crime probes

AFP, United Nations

reports are false. Many things have been overlooked and the matters of loss were not specifically mentioned in the case.

The case is dismissed, as there is no sufficient ground in this case, the order said.

Advocate Gazi Shah Alam, General Secretary of Dhaka Bar Association, advocate Forkan Mian, advocate M Abbas Uddin and advocate Enamul Haque Sardar, lawyers of advocate Sahara Khatun and associates appeared for the complainant.

The complainant filed the case in the morning but kept mum till noon yesterday.

Earlier an investigative report titled "Bashundhara Rakkhay Rashtajantra Moria (Government is desperate to protect Bashundhara)" was published on Monday and an analysis titled "Halud Sangbadikatar Ovijog/ Montobaya Nei Prodhan Bicharpatri (Allegation of yellow journalism/ No Comments of the Chief Justice)" was published on Tuesday in the daily Prothom Alo.

The report says Bashundhara Group chairman, his wife and two sons convicted and sentenced in the tax evasion cases are out on bail, which is against the verdict of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The Bashundhara authorities, however, did not protest the report.

Explain legality

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The petitioners stated that the petitioners were not involved in any corruption and the ACC filed the case against them without following due process of law.

ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harun-ur-Rashid filed the case against Khaleda, her son Tarique and five others on July 3 with Ramna Police Station in connection with embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the "fake" organization Zia Orphanage Trust.

Earlier on September 7, the trial court took into cognizance the charges against Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and four others and fixed October 25 for its next hearing.

Both Khaleda and Tarique earlier got bail from the HC in this case.

Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq argued for the petitioners, while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and ACC lawyer advocate Khurshid Alam Khan opposed the players.

National probe

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however brought allegations against the Bashundhara authorities of not cooperating with the investigation, and of mysterious negligence in duty by on-duty security guards.

Fire broke out in Bashundhara shopping mall on March 13, which damaged the floors 13 to 17 of the mall. The government formed a probe committee headed by the then joint secretary (police) Iqbal Khan Chowdhury to investigate the incident. The two other members of the committee were Director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence Maj MM Motiur Rahman, and Deputy Police Commissioner (Tejgaon) Mahbubur Rahman.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) started its own investigation since the probe committee had submitted its report. CID officials said the department is currently investigating the matter.

Sources said in order to ascertain whether the incident was an arson or not the committee investigated several matters. It was mentioned in the probe report that examining the register book it was found that security guard Abu Taher was on duty on the 18th floor. His scheduled duty was from 6:00am to 2:00pm. But he was called downstairs for lift services. He stayed downstairs for three hours.

The probe report said the fire broke out between 12:45pm and 1:15pm. But according to the occurrence book of the fire service, the incident was reported to the fire department at 1:45pm. The probe committee termed the delay in informing about the fire as mysterious.

The probe report said although the control room situated in the building was supposed to maintain a record of all daily fire extinguishing activities, it did not contain any information about the primary fire alarm of that day.

Mentioning the statements of fire fighters and other persons concerned, the report said the fire fighters did not get

Order to arrest Jalil

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against Jalil would be taken at an appropriate time.

"All these actions against Jalil have been taken for his statements and non-compromising attitude to the party chief," said an AL senior leader.

The AL leader came up against the lawsuit nine days after he was stripped of the post of chairman, parliamentary standing committee on commerce ministry on October 6.

The filing of the case and issuance of the arrest warrant against Jalil was nothing but an outcome of his recent derogatory statements about the party and ninth parliamentary elections, observed AL leaders.

In an interview with London-based Bangla TV, former AL general secretary said the party's landslide victory in the ninth parliamentary elections came through an "understanding".

Later in London, Jalil said he suffered from a trauma due to torture by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) personnel while he was in detention during the caretaker government's tenure. He blamed his state of mind for the remarks he made in the TV interview.

On October 3, Awami League Central Working Committee blasted Jalil for his statements but did not take any organisational actions except terming him "mentally imbalanced". At the meeting Prime Minister and AL president Sheikh Hasina said actions

against the last caretaker government tenure, a large number of cases were filed for dicing and corruption. The special court delivered verdict on the cases but the trials became uncertain as the convicts appealed to the high court.

Sources said after Awami League government assumed office in January, the high court quashed some cases while some have been stayed and rest remained pending.

Assassination part

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incident in 1975.

Mohitul Islam, informant and prosecution witness no. 1 in the case, has stated that the accused had put on Khaki dress during the killings on August 15, 1975.

But the then deputy superintendent of police Nurul Islam, prosecution witness no. 50, stated that the accused covered their faces with black clothes, he said.

He argued that the trial court did not consider this matter while delivering judgement. Even the two High Court judges in their verdicts also overlooked it, he said.

"This is a miscarriage of justice", the lawyer said.

"If the courts had considered this contradiction between the statements of Mohitul and Nurul Islam, the outcome of the case would be different, he said.

Mamun said his client Bazul was tried in absentia and the lawyers, appointed by the state on behalf of him, were changed three times during the trial. So the arguments of law.

But Wolff also made clear that Washington took "the allegations in the report seriously".

Israel has the institutions and the ability to carry out serious investigations of these allegations and we encourage it to do so," he noted.

The remarks came as the Security Council discussed the Goldstone report at its regular monthly meeting on the Middle East, a day before the UN Human Rights Council reopens its own debate on the issue in Geneva.

No resolution was expected to result from the Security Council debate.

Representatives of more than 40 countries took the floor, including several from Arab, nonaligned and Islamic nations who denounced Israel's alleged war crimes in Gaza, its "collective punishment" of the civilian population there and its recent "provocations in occupied East Jerusalem."

But Israel's UN Ambassador Gabriela Shalev renewed her country's total rejection of the report, after the Jewish state again warned that the report's endorsement would sink any chance of restarting Middle East peace talks.

"I regret to say that the Goldstone report is one-sided, biased and therefore wrong – just as the forum and mandate that established its mission," she said.

The report said considering that all the floors were locked and the security system was not strengthened, it is questionable whether the incident of fire was an act of arson.

Although the affected floors were the corporate tower of Bashundhara shopping mall, the mall authorities said those were not insured.

The probe committee held a press briefing on March 23, following the fire. It said at the briefing that it could not find out the reasons for the fire in the country's largest shopping mall due to non-cooperation of the Bashundhara authorities and due to a lack of necessary testing facilities. That is why the committee recommended formation of a new committee for investigating the incident of fire.

The probe committee's primary findings termed the incident as suspicious.

The then state minister for home Tariq Ahmed Sohel Taj told reporters, "In such a building there are modern equipment to detect and extinguish fire, there is also a fire alarm system, everything is recorded there. But when our investigation committee asked for the records, they were not provided with it."

The former state minister also said "For the sake of dispelling all doubts in the public, if we feel it necessary, we will definitely reinvestigate the matter."

Monsur had served as the chairman of Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla) in 2001.

Born in 1953 at Kushtabari in Sirajganj, Monsur completed his MSc from Moscow and obtained a postdoctoral degree from London.

He said scope of cooperation between two countries would further be increased in the future.

Border sees

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instead of filing cases against them to avoid the problems in jail created by their continued infiltration into Bangladesh.

A source in Bandarban district police said 550 accused and convicts, most of them Rohingyas, are staying in the Bandarban jail with a capacity of 114.

The source said the pushing back policy has been taken following directives from the high-ups in the government.

Wishing anonymity a BDR official told The Daily Star that they cannot stop Rohingyas infiltration due to lack of surveillance on 288 km long border as the geographical location is unfavourable and the number of border out post (BoP) insufficient.

Police and BDR in separate drives held 44 Rohingyas from the district this week. Of them, 12 Rohingyas were held from Ali Kadam upazila on Sunday night, 21 from Sadar upazila on Tuesday while 11 from Loma upazila on Wednesday.

MORE TROOPS MOBILISED ON BORDER
Bangladesh has sent in more reinforcements on the Myanmar border to strengthen its strategic position in the face of massive build-up and repeated provocative actions by the military junta on the other side, border sources said.

They said three more battalions were mobilised yesterday. A convoy carrying cannons, artillery guns and other armaments from Comilla and Chittagong were moved to the border. They were stationed in Baribab of Ramu and Fashiakhali in Bandarban.

Tension arose on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border as Myanmar augmented its forces in the border area with tanks, artillery guns and warships in the adjacent waters.

People in the bordering villages said Myanmar constructed bunkers to fortify the border area and its forces were patrolling with heavy weapons.

Earlier Bangladesh sent a brigade to Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar. It was moved in to the bordering area yesterday.

Sources in Bangladesh army said Myanmar would not be able to intrude into our territory, as the soldiers of BDR remain on high alert.

The court adjourned the hearing till 9:30am Sunday.

Five convicts – dismissed army personnel Syed Faruque Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Mohiuddin Ahmed, AKM Mohiuddin, and Bazlul Huda – who are in prison now, filed the appeals with the SC in October 2007.

The five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice Md Tafazzul Islam made clear yesterday that it did not prevent Mamun from reading the full judgement.

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