

Bail for five Destiny officials challenged

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday submitted petitions challenging the legality of a lower court order that had granted bail to five top officials of Destiny Group, including its managing director, in two money laundering cases.

After the hearing, Judge (in-charge) Mohammad Akhteruzzaman of the Senior Special Judges' Court took the petitions into cognisance and called for the lower court's records.

The court fixed August 30 for further hearing on the petitions filed by ACC Deputy Director Mozahar Ali Sarder and ACC Assistant Director Towfiqul Islam, also complainants of the cases.

In the petitions, the prosecutors said that the lower court has no jurisdiction over any petition submitted by the prosecution and the defence which meant that the bail order was illegal.

So, the prosecutors prayed for the cancellation of the lower court order.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Erfan Ullah granted bail to the five Destiny officials after the accused surrendered before it on August 6.

Those five officials are: Destiny's Managing Director Md Rafiqul Amin and its Director Lt Gen (ret'd) M Harunur Rashid, Chairman of Destiny 2000 Mohammad Hossain and its two directors Gofranul Huq and Sayed-ur Rahman.

On July 31, the ACC sued 22 officials of Destiny Group for laundering Tk 3,285.26 crore by cheating investors.

Meanwhile, 17 other accused in the cases surrendered before a Dhaka court yesterday seeking bail but Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ataul Haque did not accept

EC to update

FROM PAGE 20
October, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad said yesterday.

Talking to reporters at the EC Secretariat, the CEC said the updating task will begin at the same time in the areas of Dhaka North and Dhaka South city corporations.

The task for updating the voter list across the country is being done at a quick pace. Till date, 32.5 lakh new voters were enrolled in the voter list, he said.

The chief election commissioner said the EC was giving priority to holding the next parliamentary elections.

"We are thinking whether it is possible to hold upazila parishad elections before the parliamentary polls," he said.

He also expressed his frustration over the delay in holding polls to the divided Dhaka City Corporation.

"We were ready for the polls. But the elections have been delayed following the court's order. We are trying to resolve the legal complications," he headed.

About holding polls to Rangpur City Corporation, the CEC said the EC was making preparations for the polls.

Country now

FROM PAGE 20
President Zillur Rahman left for Saudi Arabia around 12:15am yesterday to attend the 4th Extraordinary Session of Islamic Summit in Makkah. He will come back on August 17.

Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia has been in Saudi Arabia since August 8 to perform umrah.

Jatiya Party Chairman and former president HM Ershad also left for New Delhi yesterday on invitation of Indian government.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, a frequent traveller, is going to Saudi Arabia to join the president's delegation after visiting London with the prime minister.

Other key political figures and ministers, including Syed Ashrafur Islam, are also abroad for the last several days.

Defence accuses

FROM PAGE 20

When the lawyer Khandokar Shah Jahan told the court that it could find the wound of his client as evidence of "torture", Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque said nothing.

The defence lawyer was cross-examining ex-metropolitan magistrate Shamima Parvin, who recorded confessional statements of 32 BDR jawans, for the third day.

The accused havilder Md Selim Bhuiya was kept in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) custody for ten days before he was taken to the magistrate to record his statement under section 164 on September 9, 2009, his lawyer alleged.

The defence counsel said, "My client wanted to show you (magistrate) the wound by taking off his clothes, and wanted to have the matter recorded in the statement. But you refused to take a look on the wound."

The magistrate, also the prosecution witness, in her reply, said, "This is not true. As he did not inform me anything about the torture, there is no question of seeing his body."

Another lawyer Jamal Khandoker said his client nayak subedar Alauddin Sarder had injury marks on his nose but the magistrate did not mention it in the

prescribed form.

She gave the accused less than ten minutes instead of three hours to rethink about giving his confessional statement, the lawyer told the court.

The magistrate, however, denied the allegations.

A report of Human Rights Watch on July 04 this year claimed that the accused BDR are subjected to gross human rights violations. It also called upon the government to immediately halt the trial.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed by the mutinous soldiers of BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh) in the 25-26 February, 2009 mutiny.

Meanwhile, Whip of the Parliament Mirza Azam yesterday started giving his deposition as a prosecution witness before the court.

Before Azam began giving his deposition as the first ever political person, defence lawyers appealed to the court to fix another date for receiving his deposition as Aminul Islam, lawyer of one of the prime accused deputy assistant director of BDR Toudih, was not present in the court.

The court criticised the defence lawyers for making the appeal and adjourned the proceedings till 27 of this month.

Rush for home

FROM PAGE 20

government employee.

If the Eid comes off on August 20, the Eid holidays will extend by a day. Offices will resume on August 22, but August 24 and 25 are weekend.

Keeping this in mind, many officials and employees are taking casual leave on August 22 and 23 to make it an 11-day holiday.

Visiting the office of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) yesterday, this correspondent found dozens of officials submitted leave applications for those two days.

Bus operators and railway authorities expressed concerns that their regular schedule might collapse due to traffic congestion and huge pressure of home-bound passengers.

"Bus schedule might be delayed due to rush of passengers, traffic jam and mechanical faults with the vehicles," said Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, managing director of Shyamoli Paribahan.

According to railway rules, a train stops for three minutes at a particular station for boarding and alighting of passengers. When the number of passengers increases, it takes around 10 minutes.

IIRO gives

FROM PAGE 1

"First, IIRO is an international humanitarian relief organisation with no less than 60 offices around the world, including in North America. Only two of those offices -- the Indonesian office and the Philippines office -- have been designated by the United States Government through the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC - an office contained in the US Department of Treasury). Only those two offices of the IIRO are prohibited from conducting business in the United States; all the remaining offices, including the IIRO headquarters located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, are not designated as supporters of terrorism and are free to do business in the United States.

Second, Jamal Khalifa is dead for many years now. IIRO has no affiliation with him. Any affiliation that Khalifa once had with IIRO was limited to the 1980's and early 1990's; during that time he performed humanitarian relief work.

Third, the allegations supporting the designations of these two IIRO offices are outdated and are not probative of IIRO's mission and duties today. The IIRO-Philippines office has remained shut since 2004, and ergo, there is no basis for the continuation of that designation today. The Indonesian government has

viewed IIRO as a humanitarian relief organisation and not a terrorist organisation (the Indonesian Government did not join in the designation of IIRO- Indonesia before the United Nations). In fact, the Indonesian government has welcomed IIRO with open arms. Based on recent correspondences with OFAC, we expect these two designations to be lifted shortly.

Fourth, IIRO has never been criminally prosecuted anywhere in the world on terrorist charges. Indeed, IIRO has consistently condemned such terrorist acts as being morally wrong and inconsistent with its mission, i.e., the provision of humanitarian aid to the destitute and orphans all around the world.

Fifth, IIRO holds an investment account with Social Islamic Bank, but has never been a member of its Board of Directors. IIRO's account with Islamic Bank Bangladesh was closed in August 2010 and IIRO does not have an account with HSBC.

OURREPLY:

The Daily Star report was completely based on a report, US Vulnerabilities to Money Laundering, Drugs, and Terrorist Financing: HSBC Case History, by the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. The report was made available on the website of the congressional watch-

India wants extradition treaty with Bangladesh

Reports Hindustan Times

STAR REPORT

At a time when there is little forward movement on Teesta treaty or land border pact, New Delhi has opened up newer areas of cooperation to sustain the thaw in bilateral ties with Dhaka.

Delhi is keen to take the security cooperation with Sheikh Hasina government to a higher level and sign an extradition treaty. It has also offered cooperation in nuclear energy sector, reports Hindustan Times.

During Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh's recent trip to Dhaka on August 5-6, a host of issues of bilateral cooperation came up for discussion.

Ramesh, who went to Dhaka as a special envoy of PM Manmohan Singh, met various Bangladeshi ministers apart from holding a long meeting with Hasina.

Security cooperation has been one of the high points of the bilateral ties after Hasina came to power. Now, New Delhi wants to cap it with a formal extradition treaty between the two countries.

The Manmohan Singh government has conveyed to Dhaka that an early signing of the extradition treaty would further strengthen the bilateral ties.

India has also offered help in civil nuclear energy -- an area of interest for Bangladesh.

India, that has an ambitious civilian nuclear energy agenda, is ready to offer its expertise on nuclear safety. New Delhi's offer is also seen as an attempt to restrict China from entering the neighbourhood's key energy sector.

Following Ramesh's visit, two more ministerial-level meetings have been lined up in September.

India's Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is set to discuss capacity building and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar will meet his Bangladeshi counterpart to extend cooperation for dryland farming to Dhaka.

Khaled wins

FROM PAGE 1

investors out of around Tk 20,000 crore. It also made several recommendations in this regard.

An HC bench comprising Justice Naima Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar delivered the verdict after hearing arguments of counsels for the petitioners, Ibrahim Khaled and the state.

Details of the judgment could not be known, as its full text was not released yesterday.

Khaled's counsel Probir Neogi told this correspondent that the HC verdict proved his client had not done anything illegal.

In May last year, three Supreme Court lawyers jointly filed the writ petition in May last year, saying that Khaled disclosed to the media contents of the probe report, crossing his jurisdiction and violating the right to information law.

The petitioners -- Abul Hashem, Khurshida Aktar and Rokan-uz Zaman -- alleged that through his statements, Khaled created unrest and anarchy in the capital market, and damaged the reputation of the individuals and businesses concerned.

They also said that in the probe report, Khaled had brought allegations against the individuals and companies without giving them any opportunity to defend themselves. This was against the principle of natural justice.

The petitioners had prayed to the court to direct Khaled to withdraw his statements. On May 19 last year, the HC asked the probe body chief and officials concerned to explain his statements to the media on stockmarket irregularities involving those individuals and enterprises.

Deputy Attorney General Mokhlesur Rahman represented the state.

35 Hizb-ut Tahrir men

FROM PAGE 1

Commander M Sohail, director of Rab's Legal and Media wing, said they had conducted the drive at Asiana Restaurant in Monowara Plaza around 6:45pm when they came to know about the seminar is being held in the name of Iftar-mahfil. Rab arrested all the 35 who were present there.

The Commander also said their intelligence had confirmed about the activities; however, the arrestees did not admit anything yet.

The arrestees were paraded before the media at the Rab headquarters in Uttara yesterday, even though the newsmen were not permitted to talk with them.

Rab also recovered some books and leaflets of the banned organisation from the spot.

Last night, Rab handed the 35 detainees over to Kalabagan police. A case

under the anti-terrorism act was filed against them with the Police Station.

Of the arrestees, four are teachers of school, college and private university; eight study in different private medical and dental colleges, English medium schools and private universities; and 12 are university admission seekers.

One youth among the arrestees is a stock market trader while nine work in different private firms and one is unemployed, said Commander Sohail.

Based on the information the arrestees had given, Rab early yesterday raided the houses of 21 arrestees and seized a large number of banned books, magazines, leaflets, camera containing photographs of their activities, a laptop, several pen drives, cell phones and SIM cards, he added.

He also claimed that the banned outfit was having a tough time since law enforce-

ers became active against them and arrested many of their activists. So the outfit had been organising invitation programs secretly where they could regroup and motivate people to join it.

The iftar-mahfil was arranged especially to motivate students, who have come to Dhaka for higher study, he added.

The Rab spokesperson also claimed that because of continuous drives against the banned outfits, like Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Harkatul Jihad, their members were shaking hands with other Islamist political parties hiding identities but carried out the activities of their own outfit.

"The number of such activists would be more than a lakh," he said, adding that in most cases detained activists of such Islamist groups get out on bail and soon rejoin their outfits.

ACC to sue railwaygate

FROM PAGE 1

the wealth statements of the duo, said ACC Deputy Director Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya.

Faruq, assistant personal secretary to the then railway minister Suranjit Sengupta, was sacked and railway general manager (east) Mridha suspended in connection with the recovery of Tk 70 lakh in April.

Faruq was on board with Mridha and Enamul Huq, Dhaka divisional security commandant of railway, when his microbus driver parked in the BGB headquarters on the night of April 9.

As the driver started shouting that there was a stash of hard cash in the vehicle, BGB personnel detained them and seized the money, reportedly part of the bribe money collected from railway job seekers.

The incident hogged the headlines and led to the removal of veteran Awami League man Suranjit Sengupta from the ministry. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman said the commission was firm on taking legal steps against whoever would be found suspicious or guilty.

The Anti-Corruption Commission has also asked former police chief Nur Mohammad, now ambassador to Morocco, to submit his wealth statement.

MRIDHA AND FARUQ

The ACC officials found proof of Mridha and Faruq

possessing a huge quantity of wealth, information about which the two concealed in the statements submitted to the ACC on June 3, and other properties that do not match their income, sources said.

In the statement, Faruq mentioned he had a Deposit Pension Scheme of Tk 1 lakh and a deposit of Tk 91.97 lakh, including the Tk 70 lakh that was found in his microbus on April 9.

Besides, he owns a 1,100 square-feet flat in the capital's Mohammadpur and 18 acres of ancestral land in Sunamganj and Netrakona.

Mridha's statement said he had Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDR) worth Tk 10 lakh and plots in the Purbachal project of Rajuk and Pirerebagh in the capital.

He also has a three-katha plot in Chittagong and a three-acre farmland in Madaripur.

His wife has a Tk 20 lakh FDR, gold ornaments worth about Tk 1.25 lakh, a two-katha plot in the capital's Bashundhara and 58-decimal land in Madaripur, 90-decimal in Manikganj and Tk 2.50 lakh in cash.

NUR MOHAMMAD

The commission on August 8 served a notice upon the former IGP after a three-member team found evidence of his illegal wealth, sources said.

ACC Deputy Director Benjir Ahmed, who leads the probe body, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have sent

a notice to the Morocco address of the former IGP through the foreign ministry."

"He [Nur] has been asked to submit his wealth statement within seven working days of receiving the notice. If he fails, he will be allowed another seven days," he said.

"We have received information about his properties from many sources. A number of individuals also have provided us with information."

The ACC carried out the probe throughout the last one year, he added.

ACC sources said letters had been sent to Bangladesh Bank and different other banks, Land Office, National Board of Revenue and other offices concerned, asking for information about the bank balance as well as properties of Nur Mohammad.

Many offices have already responded to the ACC queries.

The properties he allegedly amassed include 13-acre land, a house built on a 20-bigha plot and Tk 15 crore fish project in Kishoreganj, five flats in the capital's Mohammadpur and Bailey Road, land worth Tk 9 crore in the city's Pallabi and a 30-bigha plot of land in Gazipur, the ACC official said.

The ACC says it also came to know about huge quantities of other properties of the former police chief and various irregularities by his office while he was police chief.

HC gets 2 reports

FROM PAGE 1

from Kashimpur jail yesterday. He will be brought to court again today.

Manoj Kanti Boral, the Narayanjanj DC, in his report said Md Zakir Hossain, son of Shamsul Haque of Hathkhola Beparipara in Araihaazar of Narayanjanj, was "fully innocent".

Citing the recorded statements of 16 local people, he said Zakir lost his mother while he was a child. Later, his father Shamsul married again. Growing up in negligence, Zakir had worked as a domestic help in Dhaka.

"By nature, he is calm and peaceful. He was in no way involved in the killing. He just could not manage to secure his release after his arrest, as he was very poor," the DC added.

Zakir, who has no criminal record, was picked up by police on November 26, 2007, in the capital's Paltan area, where he used to work at a private firm. The following day, police produced him before a Narayanjanj court, identifying him as a "fugitive convict" in a murder case filed on November 11, 1991.

The court sent him to jail to serve a life sentence for "murder conviction".

On November 23, 1996, the district and sessions judge of Narayanjanj convicted one Zakir, son of Shamsuddin of Satyabandi Beparipara of Araihaazar, and sentenced him to life in jail for killing Vickchan Mia of Narsingdi, on November 11, 1991.

The court sentenced four

others to 10 years' imprisonment. Vickchan was mugged and killed in Bajbi Bazar area of Araihaazar in Narayanjanj.

The DC in his report said it appeared that MA Razzak, then officer-in-charge of Araihaazar Police Station, had implicated innocent Zakir without scrutinising the name and the address properly.

Shahidul Islam, then sub-inspector of the same police station, had committed an "unlawful act by arresting the innocent Zakir".

According to the report, some valuable years of Zakir's life have been wasted, while his wife and two sons have been living in misery.

The DC recommended further departmental investigation by police to identify the real killer, departmental measures against police officer MA Razzak and stringent punitive action against SI Shahidul.

The home ministry, which got the probe report from the current Araihaazar OC, has found that three officers of the police station -- former OC Razzak and SIs Khorshed Alam and Shahidul -- were responsible for it all.

It suggested punitive measures against the three police officers.

Earlier on June 21, based on a Bangla daily report, the HC bench issued a rule asking the officers concerned to explain why keeping Zakir imprisoned should not be declared illegal.

Zakir was produced before the HC on July 15 this year as per its June 21 order. That day

he told the court that police arrested him saying they needed to have a "talk" with him. They did not inform him if there was a case against him or if he had a conviction.

New storm threatens flood-hit Philippines

AFP, Manila

Philippine authorities warned yesterday an intensifying storm could bring more misery to the flood-battered capital and surrounding areas, where nearly half a million were in evacuation centres.

While flooding that covered 80 percent of Manila last week had largely subsided, vast areas of mainly rice-growing provinces to the north were still under water that in some places remained neck-deep.

Most of the 411,000 people crammed into gymnasiums, schools and other government evacuation centres were in the flooded farming provinces, with many others struggling by living in partly submerged homes.

"These are the people we are most worried about," civil defence chief Benito Ramos told AFP.

"We have not yet fully recovered and here comes another storm."

Sudan judge orders US resident freed over protests

AFP, Khartoum

A Sudanese judge yesterday threw out most of the charges laid against a US resident arrested over Arab Spring-style protests, ordering him to be freed after paying a fine.

Judge Abaas Al-Khalifa sentenced Rudwan Daud to the several weeks he has already spent in jail but dismissed a terrorism-linked conspiracy and other charges.

Daud could have been jailed for between five and 10 years if convicted on the most serious charge of involvement with a terrorist or criminal organisation.

Judge Khalifa said there was no evidence to support that or four other charges. He convicted Daud of creating a disturbance.

"Because when police arrested him they found him putting gasoline on old tyres preparing them to be burned," the judge said.

Govt handling

FROM PAGE 20

Tipaimukh dam project.

At a press conference in the capital, they also demanded the withdrawal of the investment Bangladesh had planned on the project to buy power.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Jatiya Nodi Rokkha Andolon (JNRA) organised the event at Dhaka Reporters Union.

At a separate programme, the Chairman of National Human Rights Commission, (NHRC) Prof Mizanur Rahman, said the Indian government must follow international laws in building the Tipaimukh Dam, to ensure the safety of Bangladesh's environment.

The concerns came in the context of a meeting between the Bangladesh members and their Indian counterparts slated on August 27-28 in New Delhi to study the impact of the Tipaimukh dam project.

At the press conference, Dhaka University teacher Prof Asif Nazrul raised questions about the government's handling of the dam issue.

"Two members from the Bangladeshi side -- Mir Sazzad Hossain and engineer MA Khashem -- have no experience or expertise in handling the issue while the others are bureaucrats who do not have independent opinions with regard to placing arguments at the meeting," he mentioned.

Prof Nazrul demanded an explanation as to why noted personalities like climate expert Prof Ainun Nishat and former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan had not been nominated for the committee.

If the government does not want to include eminent experts, the speakers said, it may make to constitute a "neutral committee" comprising foreign experts to assess the impact of the proposed dam project.

Meanwhile, the NHRC chief spoke on the issue at a workshop on Universal Periodic Review: Follow-up on the Recommendations on Climate Change and Disaster Management in the capital.

"The Indian government can build Tipaimukh dam in its own interest but it must follow international laws by ensuring the neighbouring country's environmental safety."

Due to geographical location, the possibility of damage caused by natural disasters was acute for Bangladesh "as it is in the downstream while India is in the upstream", said Prof Mizanur in his welcome speech.

He also said developed countries had to agree to compensate for the affected low-lying countries like Bangladesh as they were responsible for the adverse impacts of climate change.

Talking about the death threats against him, the rights watchdog chairman said, "The threat might have come from the war criminals or from any dishonest business community to hamper the activities of the national