

Child drowns in water tank in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-year-old child drowned in an underground water tank at an under-construction building in the city's Banasree yesterday.

The deceased, Rabbi Hasan Sifat, was son of Md Milan, a tea seller at Mollah Bari of East Rampura.

After taking lunch, Rabbi went out of his house to play but did not return until 4:00pm, said his neighbour Akkas Hossain.

As some locals saw Rabbi's sandals near the water tank, they suspected the kid might have fallen into the tank.

After a search, they recovered the child from the tank and rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

PDB fails

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But soon after winning the bid, IED Holding refrained from submitting performance guarantee (which is 10 percent of its offered price) and an authorisation letter from the original equipment manufacturer.

After giving IED Holding several notices and reminders, the PDB on August 30 served it with a notice of encashment of bank guarantee of \$3,00,000 which it had submitted during the tender process.

The power ministry is now planning to go for a re-tender, sources said.

"The selection of IED Holding was wrong. But the ministry pushed the company in the tender process because of influence of some political lobbyists, who wanted the job," said an official. "It reminds us of the way certain Chinese company won bids during 2001-2006, by quoting unusually low prices and then failing to deliver the job," he said.

Back in July 2010, due to negligence of plant officials a high voltage breaker of this Ghorashal plant failed. As a result, its turbine and generator -- were completely damaged. Later, an investigation committee identified the causes of the disaster and the people responsible for it, and suggested taking actions against them.

In December that year, the PDB floated a restricted tender in which two Russian companies and an Indian company participated. The two Russian companies -- Technopromexport and InterRoues -- sought around \$27 million to \$30 million and the Indian company -- Swati -- sought \$70 million for the job.

As the prices seemed too costly and the offers flawed, the authorities in April last year cancelled the tender. The PDB sought the prime minister's approval for direct purchase from the cancelled tender's lowest bidder -- Technopromexport. This will save time, the PDB argued.

On June 8, 2011, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signed a decision to award the repair work through a direct purchase method.

But the decision was never implemented. Instead, under the directive of the power ministry, the PDB went for a second restricted tender by including IED Holding. But it took nearly another year to award the job to IED Holding, only to face a failure.

Since the Ghorashal unit -6 went out of operation, the PDB was left with the natural gas being supplied to that plant for power generation. It took a separate initiative late last year and amendment to an existing contract with British rental power company, Aggreko, to convert its diesel-fired 145 MW plant into a gas-fired one. This is saving the PDB a huge cost for diesel import while utilising the available gas.

The deal with Aggreko will expire late next year.

House help

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Mohammad Fazlul Haque, 72, an importer and owner of Haque Paint, had been living a retired life handing over the business to his son. His wife was the first to find him dead.

DC Monirul said the family had an iftar party that night and everyone had gone to bed just after the guests left. Sabuj entered Fazlul's room climbing a tree and through the window around 1:00am.

"Fazlul got awake by a sound and recognised Sabuj in the room. He asked the servant how he got in. At this, Sabuj got scared and stabbed Fazlul in the throat and took whatever money and other valuables he could find," the DC added.

Thereafter, he hid the looted goods and went to his room on the ground floor, said Monirul, adding that Sabuj used to be Fazlul's personal help. Of the other servants, only he had the access to Fazlul's room.

Detectives, based on Sabuj's information, have recovered the knife used for the killing, Tk 50,000 and the victim's mobile phone, a watch and a gold ring.

About the motive, Md Obaidul Haque, assistant commissioner of DB, said Sabuj was angry as he had



Md Sabuj

been yelled at during the iftar party over a trifle matter.

He said following the scolding, the house help had bought the knife with Tk 15 and waited until everyone fell asleep.

Inspector (investigation) of Gulshan Police Station Nur-a- Azam Miah said they had found a wound in Sabuj's hand which they suspect he had sustained while stabbing Fazlul.

AC Obaidul said they had collected DNA samples of the victim and Sabuj for a test. After the sample collection, Sabuj had got so scared that he admitted his guilt Friday night, added Obaidul.

After the press briefing, DB police yesterday produced Sabuj before a court, which sent him to jail.

So far, DB had taken Sabuj to remand twice while the Gulshan police once on a three-day remand.

Cop closed

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and drug trafficking.

During a recent investigation, Rab found some evidence of police constable Shahidul Islam and ASI Masudur having planned and executed the murder.

It has in its hands recordings of conversations between the main accused, Tota Mallick, and the duo over the phone.

Additional Superintendent of Police Zakir Hossain Khan confirmed that Masudur had been closed to the police lines. "We could not close Shahid as he was posted to Dhaka a few days ago. However, a process is going on for action to be taken against him as well," he added.

Rafiqul Islam, additional deputy inspector general of Khulna police range, visited Kashipur village yesterday to probe the allegation of the policemen's involvement in the murder, said Faruq Hossain, Officer-in-Charge of Sharsha Police Station.

Proceedings in the case filed by the victim's father had nothing to do with this investigation and would be independently carried out, Rafiqul told journalists.

Journalist Jamal's father Abdul Alim said the additional DIG had called him and Jamal's wife Sonali Begum at Gorpara police camp at noon. He asked them about the alleged police involvement, said Abdul, adding, "We told him that ASI Masud had conspired to kill Jamal."

The Jessore police authorities have been trying to save ASI Masudur and constable Shahid from the beginning even as local people have been talking about their involvement in the killing, sources have said.

The authorities posted ASI Masud to Monirampur Police Station on Thursday and constable Shahid to the Dhaka headquarters some days earlier. That was part of regular posting, the police authorities claimed, though

Rail holds

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dramatic change in the mass transport system, DG Abu Taher added.

He was speaking at a roundtable titled "Cost of Traffic Congestion in Dhaka and its Implications on Business". Institution of Engineers Bangladesh organised the discussion at its headquarters, said an IEB press release.

The country incurs an annual loss of Tk 20,000 crore due to traffic congestion in the capital, said speakers at the discussion.

Presenting the keynote paper, Abdullah Al Mamun, an engineer of the Roads and Highways Department, said for the capital's contribution to the country's GDP would double from 35 percent now if traffic situation improved.

2 killed

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He said around 12:00 noon, the Rab team on suspicion asked a boat on Chhpara Canal to stop. But the gang on board opened fire on the law enforcers and took position in a nearby woods. The Rab members and the robbers exchanged fire for over half an hour.

Later, Rab recovered the two bodies after their associates had fled the scene.

Rab said they recovered 12 firearms including a rocket launcher and seven foreign-made light guns (LG), and one magazine and 33 bullets from the spot.

Quoting Rab, Bagerhat Police Superintendent Rafiqul Islam said the gunfight took place between 12:00 noon and 1:00pm. "Rab sought police assistance later around 3:00pm."

Sharankhola police took the bodies in the afternoon and will sent those to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital today.

Forest officer Mihir Kumar Do of East Sundarbans said he heard about the death of two people in a gunfight. But the forest department's security guards did not take part in the drive, he added.

Rab says several hundred fishermen were abducted from the Sundarbans areas this hilsha season by the gangs allegedly led by Mortuza, Sagar and Shahidul.

Of the fishermen, 14 were rescued by Rab in different drives. In addition, in the face of joint drives by the Navy and the Coast Guard, robbers had released many fishermen while some returned home after paying ransom.

Tortured

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Masud Rana after Shimu's family filed a case with the Khilgaon Police Station yesterday.

Four members of Russell's family have been accused in the case, including his parents, who are on the run.

Anwar Hossain, the victim's brother said Shimu was a student of a school in Goran when she eloped with Russell. The couple got married six months later.

Since then, Russell and his parents demanded large sums of money from Shimu's family and subjected her to frequent beatings. Five months into her pregnancy, Shimu was admitted to DMC Hospital after a particularly violent episode of beating.

Two months ago, she gave birth to twins but one of the babies died at birth. Anwar believes that the beatings she regularly endured caused the baby's death.

Shushankor Pal, sub inspector of Khilgaon Police Station said the arrestees claimed that Shimu died of an illness.

Shimu's body has been sent to Dhaka Medical College (DMC) morgue for an autopsy

Scam dug out

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import collection items.

The bank is supposed to monitor whether the party is importing the goods, he mentioned.

In this case, the branch paid the money without doing any checks.

The BB inspection found the BB branch had paid the money to the exporters' bank, but there was no evidence of a delivery of goods. And, the importers were yet to pay the banks, said the report.

Ibrahim Khaled said, "We are trying to recover the money."

The BKB boss added the exporters' bank in India still had pending bills with the BKB Kushtia branch. "But we've got a court's stay order on payment of the bills."

Contacted, Ajay Sureka, owner of Sureka Enterprise, said his firm imported goods by opening the LC during February-September 2010 and paid the bank fully.

"I don't know why my firm's name is in the report. I did not get any letter from the bank about its claim in the last two years."

An accounts official of Alam Enterprise, preferring not to be named, said the company had no dues to be paid to the BKB.

The other three firms could not be reached yesterday.

Bangladesh must rely

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desperately been trying to revive talks with the Washington-based lender to fulfil its one of the key electoral promises.

The report quotes Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as saying that Bangladesh would "not beg" from the WB. A sense of injured national pride has given rise to the unworkable notion that the bridge must now be built with Bangladesh's "own resources," it says.

In June this year, the bank cancelled its \$1.2 billion loan, citing alleged corruption by Bangladeshi public servants. "The World Bank has identified various officials as being unable to leave the money for the bridge alone," as the report puts it.

Sacking crooked-seeming officials is, for the WB, a precondition for resuming the lending. The Asian Development Bank, a co-financier of the project, is more ready than the WB to be a cheerleader for the government and is keen on resuscitating the project. Like the Japan International Co-operation Agency, another backer, it has kept the door open, said the report.

The Economist said the Bangladesh government would probably return to talks with the WB after hecoring its perceived enemies first.

Hasina had accused Muhammad Yunus, a pioneer of microfinance and a Nobel peace laureate, of putting the

WB up to walking off, says the report. Yunus had already denied that allegation. To meet the WB's conditions for reviving talks for the loan, Abul Hossain, a former communications minister, has already resigned and a couple of secretaries have been sent on leave.

Prime minister's chief economic adviser Mashiur Rahman seems to be the last barrier to the talks, although the former bureaucrat said he had done nothing wrong and would only resign if the prime minister told him to.

Regardless of Rahman's case, Bangladesh has a culture of impunity, the report says, citing that only one senior politician has ever gone to jail under an elected government for corruption, and that was a former dictator.

It adds the project has also got caught in the global and regional complex politics. "Western governments do not want to see the Padma bridge project snapped up by a state-backed Chinese company (in return, perhaps, for an equity stake and for economic influence, as has happened with ports in Sri Lanka and Pakistan)."

"India, with which Bangladesh has usually had good relations, would do its best to block a high-profile Chinese involvement in its neighbour's economy."

The Economist report says Sheikh Hasina's Awami League is livid enough that it

will be unable to keep its electoral promise to build the bridge before the end of 2013. "Yet it would be even more appalled if the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, led by Sheikh Hasina's arch-rival, Khaleda Zia, took office at the next election, bagging credit for the bridge. (That prospect is real: no elected government has won a second term)."

"So, in the end, Sheikh Hasina has no strong incentive, other than the country's best interests, to mollify the World Bank," said the report.

The biggest infrastructure project in South Asia to be paid for by foreign donors is a \$3 billion bridge in Bangladesh intended to span the Padma river.

The bridge is the stuff of donors' dreams, aiming to end the isolation of Bangladesh's poor southwest, home to three crore people who are cut off by these vast waters from the capital, Dhaka, and the rest of the country.

The report says the proposed 6.15-km bridge could be a gateway to India, tying Dhaka to the great metropolis of Kolkata. It is also a crucial piece of an even more ambitious dream of connecting South Asia with South-East Asia, via Bangladesh and Myanmar.

According to official estimates, the bridge could raise Bangladesh's annual growth rate by 1.2 percentage

China quake toll hits 89

REUTERS, Shanghai

Rescuers in southwest China yesterday tried to reach remote communities rocked by back-to-back earthquakes that killed at least 89 people and damaged many thousands of buildings, state media reported said.

Shallow 5.6 magnitude quakes struck an impoverished, mountainous part of the country with poor infrastructure and communications on Friday and the death toll could rise as news trickled in from cut-off areas, the Xinhua news agency said.

The quakes cut off electricity and triggered landslides that blocked roads, hampering rescue efforts. Adding to rescuers' difficulties was rain which forecasters said was expected for the next three days.

More than 200,000 people in Yunnan province were relocated after the quakes leveled more than 6,600 houses and damaged many more thousands of buildings. Up to 740,000 people had been affected in Yunnan's six worst-hit counties, officials said.

PM flays

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Referring to the unrest at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), the premier said her government wanted to solve all sorts of problems in educational institutions through discussions.

But, she added, it also knew how to be strict. "No one has the right to destroy the academic life of a student."

Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said the teachers could have informed the government if there was any problem.

"It wasn't as if we ignored their problems. They [Buet teachers] even met me, but did not keep their word when they returned to the campus," said a visibly disappointed Hasina. Expressing grave concern, the prime minister said she wondered who would "look into the fact that the lives of thousands of students were being spoiled due to the agitation of a few teachers and students."

"We don't want to be harsh. We want a peaceful atmosphere and quality education in every educational institution. But what kind of examples are they [Buet teachers] setting? They are humiliating their colleagues. Is there any guarantee that someday they themselves will not be humiliated?" Hasina asked.

She went on: "The president is the chancellor of the universities and he decides who will become vice-chancellor (VC)." In Buet's case, a few teachers had staged demonstrations in the middle of the night and some students joined them later, she added.

"On a particular mid-night, they seized the VC's office and pulled down his portrait. Why did they have to stage this sort of agitation, one that has no logic? Why are the teachers leading the students to such a path? Do they not know that these students might go against them as well and also assault them?"

The prime minister hoped that teachers would be conscious so that a student's life was not destroyed.

Referring to the teachers' protest at Jahangirnagar University to remove VC Prof Shariff Enamul Kabir, Hasina said the teacher, against whom other teachers had waged a movement, polled the highest number of votes at the VC panel election.

"Now, should they [the teachers who protested] not be ashamed of their agitation?" she asked.

Turning to the opposition demand for restoring the caretaker government system, Hasina said, "The caretaker government of 1/11 affected us all -- from politicians to journalists. The ghost of 1/11 is still there and we all should be vigilant so that such a system cannot return."

Grandmother gives

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has given birth to her own grandchild after becoming a surrogate mother for her infertile daughter.

Cindy Reutzel, 53, gave birth to a healthy baby girl a week ago who will now be brought up by her 32-year-old daughter Emily Jordan.

Emily was 29 when she discovered two years ago she had cervical cancer.

However, just as she was about to have a radical hysterectomy, Emily and husband Mike discovered she was pregnant.

Faced with saving her own life or their unborn child's, the young couple made the excruciating decision to go forward with her surgery. It meant losing the baby, and forfeiting any chance at having own children.

Remembering the moment she discovered she no longer had a place where a baby could grow, Emily said: "I can't describe what that was like after finding out you have cancer, after finding out your chance of ever carrying a baby is gone."

However, hope arrived in the form of mother Cindy, who offered to act as a surrogate for the couple.

And last week, Emily and Mike waited patiently in the maternity wing of a downtown Chicago hospital to realise their dream of becoming parents.

Just days after Emily's 32nd birthday, baby Elle Cynthia Jordan was born.

An in-vitro baby boom began about 34 years ago when Louise Brown - the world's first 'test tube' baby - was born in Britain.

What started with would-be mothers in their 20s and 30s, began to extend to older

women too.

Some older women were having their own babies. But more often, they were using egg donors to have their own children, or serving as surrogates or "gestational carriers."

A 51-year-old grandmother in Brazil gave birth to her twin grandchildren in 2007, and there were other stories of women giving birth in their 40s or 50s and even 60s.

Cindy had a vague recollection of those stories. So when doctors revealed that they had been able to keep Emily's ovaries intact, she immediately offered to help, asking: "What if I carried your baby for you?"

Emily and Mike didn't take it too seriously at first. "We didn't really think that was a realistic option," says Emily, who works in hospital administration.

However, for a young grandmother in good health, like Cindy, it became a viable option.

After a process that included psychological evaluation and hormonal manipulation to prepare their bodies, Kim eventually implanted Cindy's uterus with an embryo created with an egg from Emily and Mike's sperm.

It was no easy process, with a regimen of hormonal shots. Work schedules were interrupted and vacations postponed. But Cindy was committed.

Cindy, an executive director at a medical foundation in Chicago, said: "The thought of Emily and Mike not being able to have children and share that piece of their lives with someone just broke my heart."

"I want Emily to have that

connection with another human being like I had with her."

As her belly grew, people started asking Cindy about "her baby". However, she was quick to correct them and reveal she was actually carrying her grandchild.

While admitting she was worried about the physical toll a late pregnancy might take, Cindy said her body handled it better than she expected.

She also wondered how well she'd bounce back from a Caesarean section. That's how she had delivered Emily and her older brother, but that had been three decades ago.

Still, she reassured Emily and Mike throughout the pregnancy that the baby was fine, she was fine, everything would be fine.

Close watch

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scam at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch of the state-owned Sonali Bank.

Photographs, phone numbers and biodata of the couple have been sent to the airports and other exit points of the country, home ministry sources said.

Border Guard Bangladesh authorities have also been alerted.

A Bangladesh Bank probe recently found the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch had lent Tk 2,686 crore to Hall-Mark on forged documents.

Following this, the Anti-Corruption Commission launched an investigation into the swindle. It has so far quizzed Tanvir, his wife and many of Hall-Mark Group's officials alongside 17 officials of Sonali Bank.

Saarc summit uncertain

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prospect for hosting the next summit became bleak as the Maldives postponed the inter-summit session of the council of ministers may cause delay in hosting the next Saarc summit.

Masud indicated that the Saarc foreign ministers, who will meet informally on October 2 on the sidelines of the 67th UN General Assembly in New York, may discuss hosting the next summit.

Sources said Nepal is expected to convey its inability to convene the summit before May 2013 at the New York meeting.

Regarding Nepal's preparation for hosting the summit, sources at Kathmandu told The Daily Star that no homework was done since the 17th summit in the Maldives.

"It calls for huge preparations in terms of logistics

like, repairing the International Convention Centre, arranging accommodations and security for guests. But no meeting on such preparatory works was held in Nepal in the last nine months," said an official source in Nepal.

Although, Nepalese Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has called for fresh elections in November, they are unlikely to be held at that time as political parties in Nepal are divided over the timing of the elections.

The Asian News Network (ANN) on Monday reported that Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha also agreed that the political standoff has seriously hit preparations for the summit.

Saarc consists of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the