

TAQI MURDER CASE

5 accused show up in court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Five accused in the Narayanganj teenage boy Tanwir Muhammad Taqi murder case were present during the hearing at a local court yesterday.

They are: Rifat Bin Osman, Sultan Shawkat alias Bhromor, Yousof Hossain Liton, Saleh Rahman Shimanto and Tayebuddin Ahmed Jacky.

Narayanganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Kawsar Alam set June 19 for the next hearing in the case, Court police Inspector Asaduzzaman told this paper.

The case is still under probe, he added.

The Rab is investigating the case.

Nine years have passed after the murder, but the charge sheet in the case is yet to be submitted.

The five accused, who were arrested earlier, are now on bail. Eight more accused are still on the run.

Prosecution lawyer Prodip Ghosh Babu said the court ordered the investigation officer to submit the charge sheet soon.

On March 6, 2013, 17-year-old Taqi went missing soon after he left home on

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Smoke rises from an oil refinery after an attack outside the city of Lysychansk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Haji Salim taken to BSMMU from jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmaker Haji Md Salim was taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University yesterday, a day after he was sent to jail in a corruption case.

"He was taken to hospital for treatment," Brig Gen ASM Anisul Haque, inspector general of prisons, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Jail officials said Haji Salim was suffering from different health complications, including heart disease and was taken to BSMMU by an ambulance as per court directives.

Salim, who was sentenced for 10 years in a corruption case filed in 2008, surrendered before a Dhaka court on Sunday afternoon and sought bail.

Rejecting his bail petition, the court sent him to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

It, however, directed the authorities concerned to provide Salim with the first class division and better treatment in jail, following two separate petitions submitted by the defence.

Brig Gen Md Nazrul Islam Khan, director of BSMMU, said Salim was admitted to the hospital around 10:30am with cardiac problem.

"We would conduct some evaluation tests on his condition and then identify the problem."

Send us weapons, stop Russia trade

Zelensky tells Davos as Ukraine holds off latest assault in east; Russian soldier handed life sentence for war crimes

AGENCIES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used the Davos summit to appeal for more weapons and "maximum" sanctions against Russia, lamenting that tens of thousands of lives would have been saved had countries acted faster.

Appearing by video link yesterday, Zelensky delivered the headline speech to the first World Economic Forum (WEF) to be held in the Swiss Alps in more than two years after the Covid pandemic derailed the event.

The conflict shows "that support to the country under attack is more valuable the sooner it is provided: weapons, funding, political support and sanctions against Russia," said Zelensky, who received a standing ovation.

"If we would have received them by 100 percent of ours needs at once back in February, the result would have been tens of thousands of lives saved," said Zelensky, flanked by Ukrainian flags and wearing an olive-green T-shirt.

"This is why Ukraine needs all the weapons that we ask for, not just the ones that have been provided," he said, adding that 87 people were killed in a May 17 Russian strike on a military base in northern Ukraine.

Zelensky called for an oil embargo on Russia, punitive measures against all its banks and the shunning of its IT sector, adding that all foreign companies should leave the country.

"There should not be any trade with Russia," he told the gathering. "I believe there are still no such sanctions against Russia -- and there should be."

While the United States, Britain and Canada have moved to ban Russian oil and gas, the European Union has been divided over imposing similar measures, reports AFP.

In the latest fighting at the battlefield, Ukraine said yesterday it had held off a Russian assault on Sievierodonetsk, an eastern city that has become the main target of Moscow's offensive since it finally

seized Mariupol last week.

Russian forces tried to storm Sievierodonetsk but were unsuccessful and retreated, Zelensky's office said.

In Kyiv, a court handed down a life prison sentence on a Russian soldier who had pleaded guilty to killing a Ukrainian civilian at the first war crimes trial of the conflict. The Kremlin complained that it was not permitted to defend its citizen.

In Mariupol, where hundreds of Ukrainian fighters finally laid down their arms last week after a nearly three-month siege, Russian mine-clearing teams were combing through the ruins of the giant Azovstal steel plant, reports Reuters.

Ukraine has been trying to secure a prisoner swap for fighters who surrendered at the steel plant last week. The leader of pro-Russian separatists in control of the area said they would be tried by a tribunal, but a Russian deputy foreign minister was quoted as saying Moscow could discuss a swap.

Mechanism there for 11 yrs but not in use

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However, every stakeholder disregards the order, which was issued following the volatility in edible oil and sugar markets in the country in 2008-09.

The millers don't mention the prices of items in the SO and also avoid providing lists of distributors and data on monthly supply.

The national committee, on the other hand, has not taken any measures to enforce the order; it rarely meets to assess the market situation.

Asked why the order has not been implemented in more than 11 years, AHM Safiquzzaman, additional secretary at the commerce ministry, said, "I don't know... But we are now implementing the law [order]."

He said they found irregularities such as millers not mentioning prices and expiry dates in SO slips.

Besides, a broker was found collecting oil from a mill gate against an SO, which was issued one and a half years ago though the validity of an SO is only 15 days.

According to the rules, only a dealer, not a broker, is entitled to get an SO which is not transferrable.

Through such manipulations, the price of edible oil was hiked artificially several times before it reached the market from the mill gate, he said.

Shafiquzzaman, also DG of DNCRP, said the order is meant for all essential commodities, including edible oil, sugar, wheat, rice

and onion.

"The order has not been followed for any of the essentials. We, however, started following it recently for edible oil and wheat to overcome the crisis."

Following the edible oil crisis, a similar situation was created in the wheat market, he told this newspaper.

"We are collecting information on the wheat crisis from the field level and if any irregularities are found, those will be dealt with in line with the order."

SM Nazer Hossain, vice president of Consumers' Association Bangladesh, said, the order must be implemented to control prices of essentials.

"The millers must provide information as prescribed in the order. The administration should regularly monitor it and bring the violators to book. Otherwise, it will not be possible to control the prices of essentials."

DCCI President Rizwan Rahman said, "The 2011 order has not played any significant role in controlling the market and price shocks or in easing the sufferings of the end-users as the national committee for market monitoring hardly meets."

Monjur Mohammad Shariar, director of DNCRP, said they didn't have any list of dealers before the Eid when the edible oil crisis was at its peak.

"After the Eid vacation, we collected a list of dealers from the edible oil companies and sent it to the offices of deputy commissioners across the country. Now no one

can hide information and create an artificial crisis...," he claimed.

Md Shafiqul Ather Taslim, director for finance and operations of TK Group, leading importer of edible oil, said the current pricing system of essentials is unsustainable.

"I don't know if any other country in the world sets commodity prices the way the government in Bangladesh does," he told The Daily Star.

"Letters of credit (LCs) are opened almost every week to bring in products... But if the price is adjusted after three months, how will it be possible to do business?"

According to the 2011 order, manufacturers, refineries and importers will fix the prices of essentials, but they need to submit to the government the proposal for price change 15 days before it takes effect, subject to government approval.

Talking to this newspaper, Taslim Shahriar, senior assistant general manager of the Meghna Group of Industries, said, "Nothing in our business is outside the law."

"We have kept a steady supply of edible oil in the market. But some dealers may have created a crisis by not delivering the products, which is a bad practice."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Competition Commission sued eight edible oil firms on May 12 for manipulating supply and local production of the essential cooking ingredient.

The move came more than a month after the

DNCRP found that the edible oil refiners and importers reduced supply in the market in March to increase prices through an artificial shortage.

Section 6 of the Control of Essential Commodities Act, 1956, says violators face up to three years in prison or a fine or both.

Mushy, Liton

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wickets of Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Mominul, as Bangladesh started the day establishing a few unwanted records

Opens Tamim and Mahmudul Hasan Joy were left without scoring -- the third time that Bangladesh lost both openers for duck in Tests. After Najmul Hossain Shanto and captain Mominul Haque were sent back for single digits, the experienced Shakib was also dismissed for a duck.

Rajitha ended the day with three wickets for 43 runs from 19 overs while Fernando bagged two.

But after that initial barrage from the visitors, it was all Mushfiqur and Liton. The pair took their time and showed great patience in rebuilding the innings, ensuring Bangladesh did not lose anymore wicket in the next two sessions. Eventually, the duo went on to dominate the visitors.

The unbeaten 253-run stand between Mushfiqur and Liton was the highest sixth-wicket stand for the Tigers in Tests and the fifth-highest stand for Bangladesh for any wicket.

Find out those responsible: HC

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The agency submitted its report during the hearing of three writ petitions, following which the HC issued the order.

The report read that taking money in advance from a customer by an e-commerce institution for supplying products and not delivering the products on time is tantamount to fraudulence.

The e-commerce platforms may have used the customers' money to different sectors or transacted to their personal or business accounts and the money might have been laundered through such transactions, it added.

On April 21, the BFIU submitted another compliance report to the HC, saying it has found evidence of suspicious transactions and money laundering by three e-commerce platforms -- Boom Boom Ltd, Qcoom Ltd, and Sirajganj Shop.

Taka weakens further

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He blamed it on the rising import payments for the ongoing volatility in the forex market.

The coronavirus pandemic had initially disrupted the supply chain around the world, which subsequently pushed up the commodity prices in the global market.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has deepened the crisis.

The country's import payments, which were

HC DIRECTIVE AND RULES

Yesterday, the HC asked the government and ACC to identify the persons and institutions whose negligence and failure caused serious financial losses and damage to lakhs of customers of the e-commerce firms so that action can be taken against them.

The court also issued three rules questioning the inaction and failure of the respondents to prevent the financial scams of the e-commerce platforms, monitor their activities and protect the rights of consumers.

In a rule, the HC asked them to explain in four weeks why their inaction and failure to prevent the financial scams of the e-commerce platforms should not be directed illegal and why legal action should not be taken against them.

In another rule, it asked the respondents

to show causes why they should not be directed to compensate the consumers whose money has been misappropriated by the e-commerce platforms.

The court also wanted to know from them why they should not be directed to take necessary steps to protect the rights and interests of the consumers of e-commerce platforms and form an independent regulatory body to oversee the functions of the companies.

Secretaries to the ministries of commerce, finance, information and home; Bangladesh Bank's governor, and officials concerned of ACC, BFIU, Bangladesh Competition Commission and Directorate of National Consumers Rights Protection have been made respondents to the rules.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Khizir Hayat came up with the order and rules following three

separate writ petitions filed by some Supreme Court lawyers and victim consumers seeking necessary directives on this issue.

Lawyers Mohammad Humayun Kabir Pallob, Mohammad Shishir Manir and Md Anwarul Islam appeared for the petitioners.

Lawyers Shamim Ahmed Khaled, Tapas Kanti Baul and Deputy Attorney General Bepul Bagmar represented the BFIU, the commerce ministry and the state respectively during the hearing of the petitions.

Lawyer Shishir Manir filed a petition on September 23 last year on behalf of 33 consumers of the e-commerce platform e-orange.shop.

In the same month, two other lawyers, Md Anwarul Islam and Humayun Kabir Pallob, filed two other writ petitions as public interest litigations seeking some other directive over the e-commerce scams.

Moscow offers to sell crude oil to Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Russia has offered to sell crude oil to Bangladesh amid reducing demand from European countries.

"Russia offered to sell fuel [to Bangladesh], especially crude oil," Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources told reporters at the capital's Bidyut Bhaban yesterday.

"We are reviewing if we really need the fuel from them."

During the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the USA and Britain banned import of oil from Russia, one of the top fuel exporters in the world. The European Union has also announced plans to ban Russian oil.

In the meantime, some countries including China and India have started importing Russian oil at lower prices, according to reports in international media.

Nasrul Hamid also said, "We want to keep fuel prices stable. We don't want to raise or decrease the price. Although the oil price has dropped in global market, it is not enough to adjust the price."

He also stressed on introducing electric vehicles as public transport to decrease demand on fuel.

OC Pradeep's wife sent to jail in graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chumki Karan, wife of former Teknaf Police Station OC Pradeep Kumar Das, yesterday surrendered before a court of Chattogram in connection with a case lodged by the ACC over accumulating Tk 3.95 crore illegally.

Chumki, who has been absconding since the case was filed in August 2020, sought bail, but the court rejected her plea and sent her to jail.

The court of Chattogram Special Judge Munsif Abdul Majid also recorded the deposition of ACC Assistant Director Riaz Uddin, investigation officer of the case, in presence of Chumki, ACC lawyer Mahmudul Hasan told this newspaper.

With Riaz, the court has so far recorded statements of 24 witnesses in the case, he added.

The court also set May 29 for the defence hearing.

15 injured in AL infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

At least 15 people were injured in Awami League infighting in Munshiganj Sadar upazila early yesterday. Seven of them suffered bullet injuries.

Locals said supporters of Mollakandi UP Chairman Ripon Patwari and former UP chairman Mohsina Haque Kalpana clashed over establishing dominance in the area.

Ripon is also the Joint General Secretary of Sadar upazila unit AL and Kalpana is the unit's Women's Affairs Secretary.

The bullet-wounded were treated at Munshiganj General Hospital, and three of them were referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.