

GIRDER TRAGEDY

Four accused granted bail

3 others confess to negligence

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four days after their arrest, four accused yesterday got bail in a case filed over the deaths of five people from the fall of a BRT project's girder segment in the capital's Uttara on August 15.

The four are Iftekhar Hossain, managing director of IFS CON Bangladesh Limited, and its Head of Operations Ajharul Islam Mithu; Build Trade Engineering Company's Administrative Officer Ruhul Amin Mridha and its Marketing Manager Tofazzal Hossain Tushar.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shuvra Chakraborty granted their bail after their lawyers moved separate bail petitions, said court sources.

In the order, the magistrate said the four were not named in the first information report (FIR) and all sections under which the case was filed areailable.

According to the case documents, the two officials of IFS CON Bangladesh outsourced a crane operator and helper through the Build Trade officials for the project.

Three other accused -- IFS CON engineer Zulfikar Ali Shah, crane operator Al Amin Hossain Hridoy, and his helper Rakib Hossain -- yesterday confessed to their gross negligence in maintaining safety and operating the crane that was moving the girder segment.

They were produced before the court on completion of their two-day remand.

Another accused, Manjurul Islam, procurement officer of Gezhouba Group Company, the Chinese contractor of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, was sent to jail as no lawyer appeared on his behalf.

On Sunday, two other accused -- Four Brothers Securities employees Md Rubel and Afroj Mia -- gave confessional statements admitting negligence. According to case documents, China Gezhouba Group Company appointed the two for traffic management.

A day after the girder tragedy, Afran Mondal Babu, brother of two victims -- Fahima Begum and Jharna Begum -- filed the case with Uttara Paschim Police Station.

A preliminary report of the government probe committee exposed negligence on the part of the Chinese contractor, its safety team and the crane operator.



Locals fill their plastic bottles and jerrycans with fresh drinking water as others wait in line after continuous shellings damaged infrastructure and the water that comes out of the taps believed unhealthy, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Mykolaiv yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Nearly 9,000 Ukrainian troops killed so far

Says Kyiv, bans Independence Day rallies for fear of Russian rocket strikes

AGENCIES

Nearly 9,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia invaded, the country's top military officer said yesterday, as Moscow accused Kyiv over the assassination of the daughter of a leading hardliner.

The European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell meanwhile told reporters in Spain that the bloc was considering military training for Ukraine's forces.

General Valeriy Zaluzhny, Ukraine's commander-in-chief, said Ukraine's children needed particular attention "because their fathers have gone to the front and are maybe among the nearly 9,000 heroes who have been killed".

Zaluzhny's comments on the Ukrainian death toll, reported by Interfax-Ukraine news agency, was the first indication of Kyiv's military losses since April.

On Wednesday, Ukraine will mark its Independence Day -- and six months since Russian troops invaded.

The capital Kyiv has announced a ban on public gatherings around Wednesday's public holiday, and the city of Kharkiv, in

the east, has declared a curfew amid fears of Russian rocket strikes.

After Ukrainian resistance thwarted an early Russian push on the capital Kyiv, Moscow's forces have focussed on gaining ground in the east of the country.

The shockwaves of the war are being felt around the world with soaring energy prices and food shortages.

Russia's FSB security services yesterday accused Ukraine of being behind

EU mulls military training for Ukrainian forces in nearby countries: Borrell

Saturday's car bombing in the outskirts of Moscow that killed Daria Dugina, the daughter of hard-line Russian ideologue Alexander Dugin.

"The crime was prepared and committed by Ukrainian special services," the FSB said in a statement yesterday carried by Russian news agencies.

Russian President Vladimir Putin denounced the "vile crime" in a message of condolence to her family.

The FSB statement said the person

responsible was a Ukrainian woman born in 1979 who had rented an apartment in the same building where Dugina lived.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhaylo Podolyak denied that Kyiv had had anything to do with the bombing, reports AFP.

In Spain, Borrell told reporters that EU defence ministers would next week discuss launching a major training operation for Ukrainian forces in nearby countries.

"It seems reasonable that a war that is lasting and looks set to last requires an effort not only in terms of supplies of material," Borrell said.

Any such operation would be a step up from the military training that several nations are already providing to Ukrainian forces under bilateral agreements.

With much of Europe preparing for fuel shortages as Moscow cuts back its deliveries to the west in response to sanctions, Bulgaria said yesterday it was seeking talks with Russia gas giant Gazprom.

The country is almost totally dependent on Russia for its annual consumption of 3.0 billion cubic metres of natural gas.

368 fertiliser sacks recovered from UP member's warehouse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The local administration yesterday recovered 368 sacks of urea fertiliser from a warehouse of a union parishad member, who is also an Awami League leader, in Natore's Singra upazila.

Salim Reza, Singra upazila agricultural officer, said a mobile court, led by Assistant Commissioner (Land) Al Imran, also fined Mokhlesur Rahman Tk 30,000 for storing fertiliser illegally.

Mokhlesur is the UP member of ward-5 of Itali Union Parishad and also the president of the ward unit AL.

On information, the mobile court conducted the raid in Shalmara market and recovered the fertiliser sacks around 2:00pm.

Covid claims 1 more life; 178 get infected

STAR REPORT

One more person died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The total number of coronavirus-related deaths is now 29,316, and the death rate stands at 1.46 percent, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

At least 178 new Covid cases were recorded during this period. With the new infections, the number of cases rose to 20,10,148, the release added.

The daily positivity rate is 3.15 percent, while the total positivity rate stands at 13.66 percent.

A total of 5,656 samples were tested across the country during the 24-hour period.

At least 281 Covid patients recovered within this time. The number of recoveries now stands at 19,52,838, and the recovery rate at 97.21 percent, said the DGHS.

The deceased was a man aged between 61-70.

Retired police constable beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A retired police constable was beaten to death and his brother was injured critically allegedly by their rivals in Pabna's Sujanagar yesterday.

The deceased is Jahangir Alam, 65, of Bhabanipur village of the upazila.

Abdul Hannan, OC of Sujanagar Police Station, said Jahangir and his family had a long-standing conflict with Ashraf of the village.

Quoting locals, the OC said Ashraf and his men suddenly attacked Jahangir and his brother Moti Khandakar at a tea stall in Bhabanipur Bazar around 12:30pm.

Jahangir died on the spot. Moti was taken to Pabna General Hospital, which referred him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as his condition was critical.

Police detained five people, including Ashraf, for interrogation, the OC said.

Teesta, a knot that New timings for offices

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forecast data from Delhi so that it can issue flashflood warnings in Sylhet and Rangpur regions at the right time.

State Minister for Water Resources Zahed Farooque will lead a 17-member delegation at the ministerial talks with his Indian counterpart Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The water resources ministers of the two countries are co-chairs of the commission.

The previous minister-level meeting was held on March 17, 2010.

Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers. The two countries, however, have only one relevant treaty signed in 1996, which oversees the sharing of the Ganges water. The treaty will expire in 2026.

Bangladeshi-born

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on December 28, 2021.

Fahmida is an illustrator and storyteller and her work focuses on themes of identity, culture, and autonomy.

She and her art have been featured in The New York Times, NPR, Glamour, Scientific American, The Intercept, Vice, and more.

Originally from Bangladesh, she now lives and works in Seattle, Washington, reads the short bio on Fahmida published on The Pulitzer Prizes website.

New timings for offices

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said office hours of all government, semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations will be from 8:00am to 3:00pm.

The timing is not applicable for emergency services, it said.

The central bank in its circular said transaction hours of all banks and companies would be from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

"Officers and staff will have to leave office after completing all transaction-related activities by 5:00pm," the circular read, adding that the order would remain in effect until further notice.

The primary and mass education ministry in a circular said there will be two-day holidays (Friday and Saturday) for government primary schools.

It said from now on, instead of a half holiday on Thursdays, there will be a full school day.

In a separate circular, the education ministry said all educational institutions under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education will remain closed on Fridays and Saturdays.

Universities are requested to take measures following the decisions of respective authorities.

After yesterday's meeting, the cabinet secretary said government offices are also instructed to keep curtains drawn to let in daylight and reduce dependency on lightbulbs.

They are also instructed to reduce use of air conditioners, he said.

"We kept the curtains drawn during the cabinet meeting today," he said.

Meanwhile, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) issued a circular asking shops, malls, kitchen markets, commercial and business establishments to be shut by 8:00pm.

The order, made to save electricity, will be in force from September 1.

Restaurants and food shops have to shut by 10:00pm while food delivery services will operate till 11:00pm.

Entertainment establishments including cinema halls will be closed by 11:00pm. General drug stores will close by 12:00 midnight. Medicine shops attached to hospitals must close by 2:00am.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that they were observing the situation and would follow the decisions made by the government.

He also said they are going to introduce a system from Friday under which no DNCC official will be given fuel for their cars, except for vehicles used in garbage management or other emergency purposes.

"We have taken the decision to reduce fuel use and in this way, 14 percent fuel will be saved in a week," he said.

Cops forced family to receive body

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in the morning.

"When relatives and locals were protesting Sumon's death and blocked the DIT Road on Sunday night demanding justice, police along with some local Awami League leaders came to my home and asked me to receive the body as it was swelling. I asked them how I could do that when my relatives were staging protests.

"In the morning, police took us to the morgue forcefully," he

alleged.

Jannat and her family members were angry as they were not informed about the handover of the body and burial beforehand.

Denying the allegations, DMP Deputy Commissioner (Tejgaon Division) HM Azmiul Haque told reporters that Sumon's father and brother received the body. As they wished, Sumon was buried at Azimpur graveyard.

On Sunday, Jannat and her

relatives said they would not receive the body until they filed a murder case with a court accusing cops.

An assistant at the morgue told The Daily Star that police received the body around 3:00pm yesterday. Police took the body to Al-Markazul Islami on Babar Road in the city's Mohammadpur for washing, said family sources.

Mosharraf Saiful, Sumon's brother-in-law, asked, "How could police hand over the body

without informing my sister? We didn't see the father of my brother-in-law in the last two days. He is not mentally stable.

"While waiting outside a Dhaka court to file a case, we received a call from the Hatirjheel Police Station OC. He told us that we should settle the issue keeping in mind the future of Sumon's six-year-old son. He asked us to wait at the court for them, but the police handed over the body to his father and arranged the burial,"

he told this correspondent.

Sumon, a 25-year-old delivery man at a private company, died inside the lockup of Hatirjheel Police Station early Saturday, hours after he was detained. Police later that day filed an unnatural death case.

Law enforcers showed CCTV footage to journalists, which showed that Sumon died by suicide inside the lockup. His family members alleged that police demanded bribes, and tortured and framed him.

Faruque Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said police didn't force anyone to receive the body.

He alleged that Jannat was "doing politics" over the body.

Earlier yesterday, senior police officials and Sumon's father and brother held a meeting at Hatirjheel Police Station, said family sources.

The namaz-e-janaza of the deceased was held at a mosque in West Rampura before the

body was taken to Azimpur graveyard under police protection, said a relative of Sumon, wishing anonymity.

On Saturday, the Tejgaon DC said the deceased was detained in a case filed on August 15 over the theft of Tk 53 lakh from the company.

Family members alleged that police initially concealed the information about Sumon's death. They sent the body to the morgue for an autopsy without informing the family.