

Unable to settle football match dispute, UNO smashes trophies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Failing to settle a dispute over a football match, Alikadam Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mehruba Islam broke trophies on Friday evening.

Footage of the incident took social media by storm. In the footage, UNO Mehruba was seen breaking champion and runner-up trophies.

A local club in Bandarban named Abasik Juba Sadhin Samaj Club organised a football tournament on Chwikhyong High School ground.

The final match of the tournament was held on the ground on Friday where UNO Mehruba was invited as the chief guest.

The final match between Abasik Junior Ekadash and Fefarari Bazar Ekadash ended up in a draw and both the groups logged into an altercation, said Saddam Hossain, president of the organising club.

Later, Abasik Junior Ekadash was announced champion after a try breaker, but the opposition rejected the result, he added.

During the prize-giving ceremony, UNO Mehruba tried to settle the issue and said the trophies would be distributed after another match.

As both the football teams and locals rejected her settlement, she broke the trophies, said witnesses.

"I now start the second final match by breaking the trophies," she said while throwing the trophies away.

Alikadam Upazila Parishad Chairman Abul Kalam, in a Facebook post, said the UNO dishonoured the people of the upazila. He also demanded her withdrawal.

The UNO, however, could not be reached over the phone after repeated attempts.

Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Yesmin Parvin Teermizi said the incident was unfortunate.

"She should not behave like that. She could take the trophies into her custody and take further steps instead of breaking those. The incident is being investigated," the DC told journalists.

Three Chinese dead after Cambodia boat sinking

AFP, Sihanoukville

The death toll from a capsized boat off Cambodia's coast rose to three Chinese nationals yesterday, with a further nine rescued in Vietnamese waters and eight still missing, Cambodian authorities said.

The vessel with 41 Chinese people on board got into difficulties near the Cambodian casino hub of Sihanoukville on Thursday.



Vehicles involved in road accidents and seized by the highway police dumped right next to Dhaka-Chattogram highway near Kanchpur Bridge. Plants have grown all over them as they have been left there for long without any care. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Russia replaces top general after battlefield setbacks

Pursues breakaway Ukraine polls despite criticism from friends, foes

AFP, Kyiv

Moscow replaced its top logistics general yesterday after a series of setbacks as Kremlin-held regions of eastern and southern Ukraine voted for a second day on becoming part of Russia.

The changing of the guard comes amid a major mobilisation drive by Russia after the Ukraine invasion revealed widespread logistical difficulties, with Kyiv now taking back more and more territory.

Russia's invasion and recent gains by the Ukrainian army in a lightning counter-offensive have laid bare important logistical flaws with some analysts seeing logistics as the weak link in Moscow's army.

"Army General Dmitry Bulgakov has been relieved of the post of deputy minister of defence" and will be replaced by Colonel General Mikhail Mizintsev, aged 60, the defence ministry said.

Russia's partial mobilisation announced on Wednesday will likely be one of his first big logistical challenges with the hundreds of thousands of reservists being called up needing to be equipped and trained before deployment.

The voting on whether Russia should annex four regions of Ukraine started on Friday, dramatically raising the stakes seven months after Moscow's troops invaded.

US President Joe Biden has dismissed

the referendums as a "sham... a false pretext to try to annex parts of Ukraine by force in flagrant violation of international law".

Even Beijing, Moscow's closest ally since the war began in February, reacted.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi – in comments made to his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba at the UN General Assembly on Friday – said the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected".

The voting is being held in Russian-controlled areas of Donetsk and Lugansk in the east, and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south.

For four days, authorities are going door to door for four days to collect votes. Polling stations then open Tuesday for residents to cast ballots on the final day. Results are expected as early as late Tuesday or Wednesday.

"Ultimately, things are moving towards the restoration of the Soviet Union. The referendum is one step towards this," Leonid, a 59-year-old military official, told AFP.

The four regions' integration into Russia would represent a major escalation of the conflict as Moscow would consider any military move there as an attack on its own territory.

Ukrainian forces said they were clawing back territory from Moscow-backed separatists in the very lands Russia wants

to assimilate.

The snap referendums were announced just this week after a Ukrainian counter-offensive seized most of the northeast Kharkiv region – bringing hundreds of settlements back under Kyiv's control after months of Russian occupation.

The referendums recall the one held after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea in 2014.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has denounced the polls, on Friday calling them "crimes against international law and the law of Ukraine".

G7 nations declared the polls will "never" be recognised and have "no legal effect or legitimacy".

UN investigators on Friday accused Russia of committing war crimes on a "massive scale" in Ukraine – listing bombings, executions, torture and horrific sexual violence.

Erik Mose of the Commission of Inquiry – an investigative team set up by the Security Council in March – said they had seen evidence of a "large number of executions" and the rape and torture of children.

In eastern Kharkiv region, Ukrainian officials said Friday they had finished exhuming 447 bodies from a site near the city of Izyum, which was recaptured from Russian forces.

BRUR student sued under DSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A student of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) was sued under the Digital Security Act (DSA) yesterday allegedly for posting on Facebook comments that hurt religious sentiments on Friday.

The undergrad student of the Bangla department of BRUR was detained by the police from his residence in Thakurgaon's Birganj area early yesterday morning after the university authorities noticed rising tensions among their student, said Golam Rabbai, the proctor of the university.

Kamruzzaman, a student of BRUR, filed a case against the student under the DSA with Tajhat Police Station yesterday afternoon.

The police then arrested the student and produced him before a court yesterday evening, said Nazmul Kadir, the office-in-charge of Tajhat Police Station.

Elderly couple found dead in Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushi

The police recovered the body of an elderly couple from their house in Chuadanga's Alamdanga upazila yesterday.

Nazir Uddin, 70, a local real estate broker, and his wife Farida Khatun, 60, of Bazarpara area were found dead with their hands tied and faces covered.

Nazir's body was found in the bathroom while Farida's body was found in their bedroom. Both the victims had wounds on their bodies and a scissor was found lying next to Nazir.

According to Ohidul Islam, the couple's son-in-law, Nazir and Farida were unavailable on their phones since Friday morning. He went to visit them the next day and found their house locked from the inside.

Ohidul informed police, who went there with the fire service personnel and recovered the bodies.

Two farmers killed in lightning strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Two farmers died after being struck by lightning in Habiganj's Baniachong upazila yesterday.

Abdul Karim, 65, and Nur Uddin, 50, both residents of Majlishpur village, were struck by lightning while working at a field in the village's Pithabari area. The locals recovered the bodies and informed the police, said Palash Ranjan Dey, the additional superintendent of Habiganj Police.

The bodies were handed over to the families without an autopsy upon their request.

Padmasan Singh, the upazila nirbahi officer of Baniachong, said the district administration will provide, Tk 20,000 to each of the victim's families for burials.

Solve Rohingya crisis or it may fuel extremism Probe Evaly couple for laundering money

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The PM said the ongoing political turmoil and armed conflicts in Myanmar has made the Rohingya repatriation more difficult.

She said the prolonged presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh has caused serious ramifications on its economy, environment, security, and socio-political stability.

"Uncertainty over repatriation has led to widespread frustration. Cross border organised crimes including human and drug trafficking are on the rise."

She expressed concern that this situation could potentially fuel radicalisation.

Talking about the Ukraine-Russia war, she demanded an immediate end to the fighting and resulting sanctions for the sake of lives and livelihoods of the people throughout the world.

"We want the end of Russia-Ukraine war. Due to sanctions, and counter-sanctions, not a single country, rather the entire mankind including women and children is punished," she said.

The PM mentioned that the impact of the war does not remain confined to one country, rather puts the lives and livelihoods of the people of all nations in greater risk, and infringes their human rights. "People are deprived of food, shelter, healthcare and education."

Hasina said children suffer the most in particular and their future sinks into darkness. "I urge the conscience of the world community – stop the arms race, war and sanctions. Ensure food and security of the children. Establish peace."

The premier said she wanted to see a peaceful world with enhanced cooperation and solidarity, shared prosperity and collective actions. "We share one planet, and we owe it to our future generations to leave it in a better shape."

She said all believe that antagonism like war or economic sanctions, counter-sanctions can never bring good to any nation. "Dialogue is the best way to resolve crises and disputes."

In this regard, the PM thanked the UN secretary-general for setting up the Global Crisis Response Group.

"As a champion of this group, I am working with other world leaders to determine a global solution commensurate with the gravity and depth of the current situation."

Hasina said the Ukraine-Russia war, economic sanctions and counter-sanctions led to a supply chain disruption and exorbitant price hike of fuel, food and consumer goods.

"This has put the economy like ours under tremendous pressure. Inflation has increased. We are taking various initiatives to overcome this situation," she noted.

Regarding the impact of climate change, the PM said it is one of the biggest threats to humankind.

She said the Bangladesh government has taken many transformative measures to tackle the perilous impacts of climate change consistent with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

During Bangladesh's presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, it launched Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan, which aims to put Bangladesh on a sustainable trajectory from vulnerability, Hasina said.

"Our national plans and policies on climate change and natural disaster are gender responsive, and take into account the critical role of women in adaptation and mitigation."

The PM said Bangladesh is ready to support other vulnerable countries to develop their own prosperity plans. She called upon the world leaders to promote inclusive climate action.

She reiterated Bangladesh's zero

tolerance policy on terrorism and violent extremism.

"We do not allow our territory to be used by any party to incite or cause terrorist acts or harm others," she said.

The premier also called upon the UN member states to work together for the conclusion of an internationally-binding instrument to tackle cybercrimes and cyber-violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hasina said Bangladesh as a responsible UN member state is fully committed to protecting and promoting the human rights of its own people. "We have adopted a holistic and inclusive approach to ensure the political, economic, cultural and social rights of the people."

She said Bangladesh is interested in looking for transformative solutions to poverty alleviation, mitigating climate change effects, preventing conflicts and finance, energy, and fuel crises that the world is grappling with now.

The PM, however, pointed out that socio-economic development cannot be achieved without ensuring peace and stability.

SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIANS

Hasina said Bangladesh will continue to extend its support to the Palestinian people.

She reiterated Bangladesh's unequivocal support for the two-state solution based on pre-1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

She indicated that the greatest lesson learnt from the pandemic is that "until all are safe, no one is safe".

"We must use the hard-earned lessons to stimulate critical and much needed reforms of our institutions, including of the United Nations, to better prepare for such calamities in the future," the premier said.

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employee list provided by the management.

"We could not verify the authenticity of these cash withdrawals whether these are essentially required for the company's operation," the audit said.

Evaly, which began its journey on December 16, 2018 with a paid-up capital of Tk 1 crore, did not have a chief financial officer (CFO) or followed any accounting rules, the audit found.

Mohammad Rassel, who founded Evaly with his wife Shamima Nasrin, served as the managing director, chief executive officer and CFO. The roles of CFO and CEO cannot be held by the same person for checks and balances.

"Evaly is a family company comprising of husband and wife and the board was accountable to none."

Whenever the board asked Evaly's officers and employees were asked anything about the company, their reply was: "Rassel sir knows everything. We know nothing."

Rassel has been in jail since September 16 last year after the Rapid Action Battalion arrested him and Nasrin in a case filed by a customer over an undelivered order.

Subsequently, the auditors were not provided with the material needed – such as bank books, cash books, relevant ledgers and documents – to conduct a comprehensive assessment.

When all business-related user IDs and passwords were sought, Rassel said he had earlier handed over a diary containing the information to one Salauddin, who is the landowner of Wins Court, where Evaly's office is housed, said the audit report that was handed to the board on September 8.

But Salauddin did not have any such information.

Mahbub Kabir Milon, the HC-appointed MD, opened the drawer with the help of security personnel and did not find any such diary except some unused chequebooks.

"However, this is not a convincing statement that user IDs and passwords of the company's IT software and systems are lying with the former managing director and without his intervention, no access to the systems is possible."

In the absence of important books and documents, the auditors then adopted an alternative method of verification based on bank statements.

They ran into a brick wall through that method, too.

The auditors found Evaly made more than Tk 6,000 crore transactions with "very poor, unreliable, unorganised, incomplete books and records".

Neither the list of customers who paid the advances to the company could be obtained nor the list of merchants.

The auditors were not provided with a system-generated inventory report, inventory verification report, list of obsolescence items, delivery and order closing report and voucher report among others.

So it was not possible to determine the amount the customers and suppliers were owed. No financial position except the balances on various bank accounts could be worked out, the audit report said.

Most of the money coming into Evaly was through bKash, Nagad and Rocket: Tk 4,867.8 crore was deposited in its accounts with the mobile financial service providers until June 30 last year.

No sales invoice, order, receipt, voucher or other statement could be found that the auditors would be able to establish from where the amounts came.

"The source and purpose of these deposits are vague," the audit report said.

Of the sum, Tk 4,702.5 crore was transferred to Evaly's 13 bank accounts, with Tk 37.1 crore remaining unidentified.

The auditors were furnished with bank statements of 11 of the accounts, which had deposits of Tk 6,052.6 crore.

But in the absence of documentation, it was not possible to reconcile the majority of the balances or confirm the sources of the deposited money.

Of the amount, 38 percent (Tk 2,307.8 crore) was withdrawn. But no documentation could be found, making it impossible for the auditors to work out whether the amount was withdrawn for the company's day-to-day running.

"It is apparent that the sponsors'

intention for running the business was improper and malafide," the board said in its report.

They were enabled by unwitting low-income people.

"The company and the owners took advantage of the simplicity of these innocent helpless customers who were lured by the company to a mousetrap and bring the company to the brink of destruction."

Evaly did not take any loans; just with the advance payments of customer orders, it paid its employees generously, appointed celebrities as brand ambassadors, sponsored cricket tournaments and advertised aggressively.

"Since inception, the company has been spending the customers' and the product suppliers' money according to their own whim. While considering the business transaction of Evaly it transpires that the main objective of the company was to make money from the customers at any technique. That means, cheating the customers, which is completely illegal."

The board went on to term Evaly's business model a Ponzi scheme.

"The sponsors of Evaly knew it from the very beginning that the business is destined to be closed at one point of time within which the sponsors would be able to make their fortune."

Rassel and his wife, who maintained a luxurious lifestyle, were out of their depth in running an e-commerce platform.

Without a minimum understanding of the basic business management issues, the two were destined to run the company to the ground, the board added.

"We can safely come to conclusion that we do not find any visibility for reviving the company until the sponsor, shareholders, or any potential investors either local or foreign inject sufficient required cash for bringing the company in an operating condition," the audit report said.

That scenario is unlikely, according to AKM Fahim Mashroor, the CEO of Bdjobs.com and AkerDeal.

"No rational investor will be willing to invest in such a company that has no proper financial statement."