

Media must be careful about reporting on court proceedings: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has said the media must be careful about reporting on court proceedings.

"Journalists will have to report on court proceedings accurately.... They must not make any false or distorted reports," the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat said on Wednesday during a suo moto (voluntary) proceedings.

The bench said, "Reporters can take help from the deputy attorney general, assistant attorney general, lawyers, and bench officers concerned in preparing reports if they don't understand our proceedings and conversations."

Justice Nazrul, presiding judge of the bench, said, "Some media outlets have made reports distorting our comments on the embezzlement of public money from banks [on Monday]."

Speaking to this correspondent, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik said a few online portals ran reports on November 28 claiming that the HC bench said that "everything is becoming empty", though the bench didn't make any such comment.

The HC bench, however, appreciated the reports published by The Daily Star and Bangla daily Prothom Alo on its orders and comments as those were accurate, he added.

16 BNP men sent to jail in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday sent 16 people to jail on charges of violence during the BNP rally in the district.

The accused include Nagarkanda upazila unit BNP's General Secretary Saifur Rahman and the unit's Vice-President Alimuzzaman Selu, said Sumon Ranjan Sarker, assistant superintendent of Faridpur (Sadar circle) police.

Police filed a case against them and 15 other BNP leaders and activists on Wednesday following the violence during the BNP's rally in Faridpur.

Mahabul Karim, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station in the district, filed the case accusing 31 BNP men, along with 40-50 unidentified accused, over obstructing government work and attacking the police.

On Wednesday, BNP leaders alleged that Jubo League and Chhatra League men attacked their rally on Faridpur Press Club premises around 4:00pm, exploded crude bombs and vandalised chairs.



City Gate, an entry point of Chattogram city, which has been uncared for long, being decorated on the occasion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to the port city. Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, is expected to join a party rally at the city's Polo Ground on Sunday. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

40pc of power grid still damaged

Says Ukraine a week after missile strikes; Russia pulls back forces from river towns opposite Kherson

AGENCIES

Nearly half of Ukraine's electricity grid remains damaged, a private operator said yesterday, a week after the latest Russian strikes on the country's energy infrastructure disrupted power to millions of people.

"Russia has destroyed 40 percent of the Ukrainian energy system with terrorist missile attacks. Dozens of energy workers were killed and wounded," DTEK company said in a statement on social media.

After suffering humiliating military defeats on the ground, Russia began targeting Ukrainian energy facilities in October, causing severe damage and power shortages. Last week, a latest series of massive strikes on these sites left entire regions across Ukraine cold and dark.

"Electrical engineers are doing everything possible and impossible to stabilise the situation regarding energy supply," the company said, saying its technical teams are working "day and night" to quickly repair the infrastructure.

Authorities said Wednesday that nine people had died in fire-related accidents

in the country over the past 24 hours, as Ukrainians are forced to find alternate heating sources, reports AFP.

Britain's defence ministry said in a note yesterday that continuing Russian strikes on energy infrastructure result in "indiscriminate, widespread humanitarian suffering across Ukraine".

"However, its effectiveness as a strategy has likely been blunted because Russia has already expended a large proportion of its suitable missiles against tactical targets," it said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's military said yesterday Russia had pulled some troops from towns on the opposite bank of the Dnipro River from Kherson city, the first official Ukrainian report of a Russian withdrawal on what is now the main front line in the south.

The statement gave only limited details and made no mention of any Ukrainian forces having crossed the Dnipro. Ukrainian officials also stressed that Russia had intensified shelling across the river, knocking out power again in Kherson where electricity had only begun to be restored nearly three weeks after

Russian troops vacated the city and fled across the river, reports Reuters.

Separately, Ukraine tightened security at its diplomatic missions around the world after a mail bomb exploded at its embassy in Madrid, one of several devices sent to targets in Spain, including to Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

Ambassador Serhii Pohoreltsev told the Ukrainian news site European Pravda that the suspicious package addressed to him had been opened outside the building by the embassy's Ukrainian commandant, who was injured in the blast.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defended missile strikes across Ukraine yesterday, saying Moscow was targeting Ukraine's civilian infrastructure to prevent Kyiv from importing Western weapons. He did not explain how such attacks could achieve that aim.

The European Union called this week for a special tribunal to prosecute Russian officials accused of aggression, the war crime of attacking another state without justification. The Kremlin rejected this yesterday.

Irregularities well-orchestrated

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for misconduct and negligence.

According to the EC officials, these police officials did not take any action against irregularities, despite the request of the POs. Rather, the law enforcers asked the polls officials to look the other way.

The commission also suggested taking action against Saiful Islam, PO of polling centre 94, as he, amid the ongoing investigation, took part in a live programme and said the election was free and fair.

The EC recommended action against Gaibandha ADC (general) Sushanta Kumar Mahato, as he forced the PO to write a statement saying the election was free and fair.

The commission also blacklisted all the polling agents appointed by candidates from discharging similar duties in the next election.

Asked about what actions have been taken against the DC and the SP of Gaibandha, the CEC said the probe committee did not find their involvement in irregularities.

It should be mentioned that the CEC on October 13, a day after the by-polls, said he spoke with the SP and the DC on the election day and asked them to enforce law and order

to make it a "beautiful election".

The CEC also said they did not find involvement of any candidate in irregularities.

Awal said they would announce the re-election date next week.

PROBE ANDEC REVIEW

The EC formed the probe committee on October 13 to find out how the irregularities took place at 51 polling centres where they stopped the election on the polling day.

Later, the EC asked the committee to investigate whether irregularities took place at all the polling stations.

Gaibandha by-election was the first by-polls under the current EC.

The EC officials said the probe committee found evidence of various irregularities. It found the polling agents and unauthorised persons cast votes instead of actual voters.

In many cases, voters were forced by polling agents to cast votes for a specific symbol. Unauthorised persons also entered the polling stations and took control of the centres.

The EC in its review said similar irregularities took place in almost all the polling centres and they were done in a well-planned way.

Besides, it is not clear why Gaibandha police intelligence was

unable to know about the planning or give the information to the authorities concerned, including the returning officer.

"However, during the investigation, all the polling agents or officials stated they committed this injustice voluntarily. It can be assumed from their statements that if they divulge the identities of those behind such wrongful acts, their life could be in jeopardy."

The EC also said many think that such irregularities during the election have become a norm in the country. Therefore, during the investigation in Saghatapara upazila, when the agents were shown the video footage of centre-72, all of them unanimously said, "If you consider it a crime, then it is; otherwise, it's not."

The EC report read, "It has become clear from this incident that irregularities in elections have become a usual matter. If that's true, it seems we don't need any election."

"... the commission has been able to guess on whose order they [agents and officials] committed such wrongdoings. But it cannot take legal actions against the planners as their names were not mentioned by the agents and officials."

Argentina get their mojo back

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Saudi Arabia in the World Cup opener. With over 40 minutes of play left in that game, Argentina failed to find an equaliser.

Then came the Mexico match where a lacklustre first half was followed by an equally ineffective team performance in the second half. It took a blinding strike from the talismanic Lionel Messi to keep them in the Lion Cup.

With no semblance of team processes finding their way onto the pitch, the feeling was that it would have to be Messi again who had to do it all. That is where Argentina once more surprised.

As the playmaker, Messi is a large part of how Argentina build their attack. With only a win being a sure-fire way to go through a very tricky Group C, the Albiceleste started with promise.

However, the pressure on Messi was surreal as opponents easily realised how to keep Argentina at bay by keeping the number 10 on a tight leash. Thus, Messi committed

to make his presence felt very early with a few slaloming runs and Poland hoped their defences would hold well enough to get a draw.

With Poland sacrificing the ball in favour of being organised at the back, Argentina finally found the time they needed on the ball to get some much-needed faith back in their game.

Two youngsters in midfielder Enzo Fernandez and forward Julian Alvarez started the game against Poland after good performances against Mexico and, with Argentina finding their rhythm with the ball, the two youngsters gradually grew into the game.

However, when Messi's penalty was saved, it appeared that a World Cup campaign already burdened by an onrush of nerves at critical moments would finally be derailed.

But having found their process in the first half, Argentina showed some real rhythm to their play and immediately pounced in the second half with the first goal. The Argentine midfield ran riot, creating space and, instead of taking the burden of all

attacking pursuits, Messi settled into his natural playmaking role, making line-breaking passes and keeping defenders on their toes whether on or off the ball.

Argentina racked up a huge number of passes and stunningly recovered their style of play. A 27-pass move ensued, the ball was swept from left to right, Messi turned and left two Polish players in his wake before releasing a pass down the right and Argentina then isolated Enzo one-on-one down the left half space. From there, he dinked a pass between two defenders and through to Alvarez for a goal that evoked memories of Argentina's 27-pass goal in the 2006 World Cup against Serbia.

Argentina as a team finally showed up at the World Cup, giving Messi that extra cushion in the second half with World Cup on the line.

"We found confidence to trust our game again. It cost us in the first few matches but hope we can maintain this," Messi, who found that rhythm along with his team, said after the game.

Germans eliminated

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comeback, just as they did against Germany.

Tanaka's goal was highly controversial after the officials relied on VAR to decide Kaoru Mitoma had kept the ball in play by a hair's breadth to set him up.

Spain struggled to create chances against a staunch Japanese defence in the final stages, with the Asian side aware that conceding another goal would see them eliminated.

Japanese players collapsed at full-time in celebration, exhausted and elated, while the substitutes raced on to celebrate.

Spain face Morocco in the last 16, while Japan play Croatia.

Both sides made five changes, with Luis Enrique bringing in Morata to lead the line, and handing Alejandro Balde and Nico Williams their full debuts.

Japan started with five at the back, hoping to keep Spain at bay, but pressed high in attack to try and capitalise on any mistakes.

Spain are sometimes guilty of glaring defensive errors and Pau Torres exemplified that with a sloppy touch which led to Japan's first chance, fired into the side-netting by Junya Ito.

Morata sent La Roja ahead in the 12th minute with a towering header from Cesar Azpilicueta's cross, rekindling the connection which occasionally worked at Chelsea after the striker's arrival in 2017.

Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu replaced the ineffective Takefuso Kubo and Yuto Nagatomo at the break with Mitoma and Doan, and it paid instant dividends.

Balde lost the ball under pressure and from the edge of the box winger Doan hammered past Unai Simon, who

might have done more to keep it out.

Three minutes later and Japan had turned the game on its head, Tanaka bundling home from on the goalline after Mitoma had miraculously kept the ball in play as he crossed it — according to VAR.

Spain were shellshocked and struggled to react, with Luis Enrique making a raft of substitutions to try and regain control.

The coach, alone and perched on the edge of his technical area, was unaware that for a few moments his team faced elimination, when Costa Rica took the lead against Germany in the other game to go 2-1 ahead.

Spain survived, progressing thanks to their superior goal difference, on a night that was far more terrifying than they had anticipated — and Japan secured a hugely unlikely achievement

People 60 and above to get 4th dose of Covid vaccine

STAR REPORT

People aged 60 years and above will receive their fourth dose of coronavirus vaccines, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"We have vaccines in our stock and had talked to the prime minister in this connection. The technical committee has also endorsed our plan to administer the fourth dose," the minister said.

He made the comments while addressing an event as chief guest marking World AIDS Day 2022.

Meanwhile, the health directorate has started a weeklong countrywide campaign to inoculate 90 lakh people, aged 12 years and above, with the second and booster doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

2 MILITANTS' ESCAPE

10 Ansar al-Islam men on fresh remand

STAR REPORT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed 10 members of Ansar Al-Islam, accused in a case filed snatching two convicted militants from police custody, on a fresh five-day remand.

Dhaka metropolitan magistrate Shafuiddin passed the order after Abul Kalam Azad, inspector of the DMP's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, produced them before the court.

Azad, also the investigation officer of the case, told the court that all the 10 accused were interrogated on remand and they gave important information about the escape of the two death-row convicts from the court premises on November 20.

"But they avoided answering some questions about the whereabouts of the two."

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER PROBE

Report submission deadline extended for 94th time

STAR REPORT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the deadline for submitting the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Rumi till January 4 next year.

This is the 94th extension of the deadline for the probe report submission.

Dhaka metropolitan magistrate Rashidul Alam passed the order after Rab Additional Superintendent of Police Khondoker Shafiqul Alam, the investigation officer of the case, failed to submit the probe report yesterday, court sources said.

On October 31, the same court asked Rab to submit the report by yesterday.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Rumi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed on February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar.

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka ends resort blackouts to woo back tourists

Sri Lanka said yesterday it was reorganising its blackout-prone electricity grid to guarantee power to tourist resorts, in an effort to lure back foreign travellers after a bruising economic crisis.

Months of food, petrol and pharmaceutical shortages brought widespread misery to the island nation this year, along with power cuts that reached 13 hours a day at their worst.

The unprecedented financial shock sparked months of angry

protests, culminating in July when a crowd stormed the compound of then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa and forced him to flee the country.

But the crisis has since eased and the government that took charge after his departure is eager to jumpstart the tourism industry, a crucial source of revenue.

"We will have a good winter season," tourism minister Harin Fernando told reporters in Colombo. "The situation has improved and it is safe for holiday-makers."

The energy ministry announced that designated tourist areas would

be exempt from national blackouts still in force for 2.5 hours each night.

Those areas include Sri Lanka's lush southern coastal beaches and the hill region around Ella, home to nature reserves famed for their elephant herds.

Sri Lanka has been unable to meet its energy demand after struggling to pay for imported fuel for power plants.

But the ministry said recent rains had filled dam reservoirs for hydroelectricity and eased pressure on the grid.