

Bails of 146 BNP men denied

Rizvi, Khokon, Milon, Shimul among them

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petitions of 146 leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations in a case over the December 7 clash with policemen in the capital's Nayapaltan area.

They include BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi; the party's Joint Secretary General Khairul Kabir Khokon; former BNP lawmaker and organising secretary Fazlul Haque Milon; and BNP Chairperson's personal assistant Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ataullah passed the order after their lawyers moved the bail petitions saying two BNP leaders -- Amanullah Aman and Abdul Kader Bhuiyan Jewel -- secured bail on December 8 after they were produced before another Dhaka court in the case filed with Paltan Model Police Station on December 8.

The prosecution, however, opposed the petitions saying their bail petitions should be rejected as specific allegations were brought against them.

Upon hearing both sides, the magistrate turned down the defence.

On December 15, another Dhaka court for the third time rejected the bail petitions of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and its standing committee member Mirza Abbas in the same case.

The case was filed a day after the clash broke out in front of the party's Nayapaltan office.

The clash left one person dead and scores of others injured.

A total of 450 leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations were arrested and produced before a Dhaka court.

Law enforcers picked up Fakhrul and Abbas from their homes around 3:00am on December 9. The same day, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim sent Fakhrul and Abbas to jail, rejecting their bail petitions.

The two BNP leaders were shown arrested on a charge of provoking party members to launch an attack on police in the Nayapaltan area.



A view shows a residential building damaged by a Russian military strike, amid Russia's ongoing offensive on Ukraine, in Bakhmut, Ukraine, yesterday

PHOTO: AFP

Heating, power restored in Kyiv

Says mayor after Russian missiles batter Ukraine's grid; one killed, four hurt by shelling of Russian region

AGENCIES

Heating has been fully restored to Kyiv after the latest Russian bombardment that targeted water and power infrastructure, the capital's Mayor Vitali Klitschko said yesterday.

"The city is restoring all services after the latest shelling," Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app. "In particular, the capital's heat supply system was fully restored. All sources of heat supply work normally."

Ukrainian officials said Russia fired more than 70 missiles on Friday in one of its heaviest barrages since the Kremlin's February 24 invasion, forcing emergency blackouts nationwide and cutting access to heat and water.

Temperatures in Kyiv and many places across Ukraine were below freezing yesterday morning, with forecasts expecting them to dip to minus 6 degrees Celsius in the capital by the evening.

Kyiv is by far the largest city in Ukraine with an estimated population of about 3 million, with up to two million more in the Kyiv region. As of late Saturday, a third of the city remained without power.

Sergei Kovalenko, chief executive of

YASNO, which provides electricity for Kyiv said late on Saturday that access to power has been increasing with each hour.

"The situation remains difficult and critical," Kovalenko said on his Facebook account.

Ukraine has managed to restore power to almost 6 million people in the last 24 hours, President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a video address.

"Repair work continues without a break after terrorist attack. ... Of course, there is still a lot of work to do to stabilize the system," he said.

"There are problems with the heat supplies. There are big problems with water supplies," Zelensky added, saying Kyiv as well as Vinnytsia and Lviv further to the west were experiencing the most difficulty.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and four people were wounded by shelling in the southern Russian region of Belgorod near the border with Ukraine yesterday, the governor of the region said.

"Our air defence system was activated over Belgorod and the Belgorod region," Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

"Four people are known to have been injured. Medical teams are taking them to

hospital," he said.

A poultry plant has been damaged and windows in several residential buildings and cars have been hit, he added. Three witnesses told Reuters that loud blasts were heard in the city yesterday.

Meanwhile, veteran US diplomat Henry Kissinger said the time is approaching for a negotiated peace in Ukraine to reduce the risk of another devastating world war, but dreams of breaking up Russia could unleash nuclear chaos.

Kissinger, an architect of the Cold War policy of detente towards the Soviet Union as secretary of state under Republican presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, has met Vladimir Putin multiple times since he first became president in 2000.

"The time is approaching to build on the strategic changes which have already been accomplished and to integrate them into a new structure towards achieving peace through negotiation," Kissinger wrote in The Spectator magazine.

"A peace process should link Ukraine to Nato, however expressed. The alternative of neutrality is no longer meaningful," Kissinger wrote in the Spectator magazine in an article entitled "How to avoid another world war".

Man dies under train at railway station

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A man was killed in a train accident at Nachole railway station in Chapainawabganj yesterday.

Hossain Ali, 65, of Guthoil village in Nachole upazila, went under the wheels of a Rajshahi-bound train, said Mintu Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nachole Police Station.

He was trying to cross a rail track on the station premises around 10:45am. He died on the spot, said the OC, quoting locals.

On information, railway police recovered the dead body and handed it over to the victim's family after completing the legal procedure, the police official further said.

16 Rohingyas held in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police detained 16 Rohingyas, including children, from Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila yesterday.

They were detained from an Ena Paribahan bus while travelling from Chattogram to Moulvibazar, said Jahangir Hossain Sardar, officer-in-charge of Sreemangal Police Station.

A police inspector of Moulvibazar was going to Moulvibazar from Chattogram in the bus last night. At that time, when he suspected some passengers in the bus to be Rohingyas, he reported the matter to the police control room.

As the bus reached Sreemangal's Chowmuhan road, police conducted a search and detain them. They confirmed that the detainees are Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar after talking to them.

The detained Rohingyas have been kept in police custody, the OC said.

Toddler on mother's lap dies as bus hits rickshaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-year-old girl died after a BRTC bus hit a rickshaw in the capital's Mirpur-1 area last night.

The toddler named Raisa was on her mother's lap in the rickshaw when the bus of the state-owned company hit it, making the child fall on the road and get seriously injured around 8:30pm.

The mother and daughter were immediately taken to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Raisa dead, said Darussalam police, adding that the bus driver named Al Amin was detained.

Militants kill 4 cops in attack on Pak police station

Four others critically hurt

AGENCIES

Four Pakistani police officers were killed and another four critically wounded yesterday when suspected militants attacked a police station in the country's volatile northwest, police said.

The suspects used grenades and automatic weapons on the station in Lakki Marwat district before fleeing the scene overnight, said Nawaz Khan, an officer of the targeted police station.

By-polls

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On December 11, five out of seven BNP members of the parliament (MPs) submitted their resignation to Speaker of Parliament Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, as part of their anti-government movement with a 10-point demand that includes dissolution of parliament.

The MPs who resigned in person are Md Zahidur Rahman of Thakurgaon-3, Md Mosharof Hosen of Bogura-4, Gulam Mohammad Siraj of Bogura-6, Md Aminul Islam of Chapainawabganj-2, and Rumeen Farhana, from women's reserved seats.

Md Harunur Rashid of Chapainawabganj-3, who is now in Australia, and Abdus Sattar Buiyan, the ailing MP of Brahmanbaria-2, could not tender their resignations in person and did it through email.

In the afternoon, the Parliament Secretariat issued a gazette notification declaring the seats of six BNP MPs vacant.

The seat of Harunur Rashid was not declared vacant as his resignation letter was not accepted.

The JS secretariat could not be sure whether the signature on Harun's resignation letter was by him.

"He'll have to sign the letter by himself and send it again," Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury told reporters at her parliament office after receiving the resignation letters.

Tunisia opposition calls for Saied to quit after voters shun election

AFP, Tunis, Tunisia

Tunisia plunged into political uncertainty yesterday as its main opposition alliance called on President Kais Saied to "leave immediately", a day after voters overwhelming snubbed elections for a neutered parliament.

That comes with Saied's government negotiating a nearly \$2-billion package to bail out the North African country's crippled public finances.

Messi no mortal

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experience to parry the attempt for a corner as the match headed into extra time.

Substitutes Lautaro Martinez and Gonzalo Montiel forced excellent blocks from Raphael Varane and Dayot Upamecano as Argentina started to dominate again in extra-time and got rewards when Messi tapped in from close range – his seventh goal of the campaign – after Lloris could only parry Martinez's shot in front.

Mbappe had other ideas though. With a second world title slipping away, he fashioned a fierce shot towards goal, earning a spot kick as the ball hit Gonzalo Montiel on the arm. Mbappe drove the ball powerfully to take the game into the shootout.

The 23-year-old Parisian, who became the first man since Brazil's

Ronaldo in 2002 to score eight goals in a single competition and the second man after Geoff Hurst of England in 1966 to score a hattrick in the final, was the first to step up for the penalty shootout. And he didn't miss. Messi, too, was at his impeccable best. And the Messi-inspired Argentina team were at their best too as they converted all four of their spotkicks while France could only convert two.

In a contest reminiscent of their quarterfinal win against Netherlands but much more thrilling than that, it was once again Messi and the team's excellent spot-kick technique that eventually drove them towards the ultimate glory. And perhaps there was more passion and hunger about the Argentina side which managed to dethrone Mbappe's France, albeit after a mighty scrape.

Chinese cities battle first wave

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officials and leaders, several hearses a minute could be seen entering yesterday, while the parking area for private cars was also full.

"Right now it is difficult to book a hearse so many relatives transport the body with their own vehicles," said an employee on condition of anonymity.

Smoke billowed out of crematoriums, where groups of people were gathered to collect the ashes of the deceased. It was not immediately clear to what extent a rise in Covid-related deaths was responsible.

Social media posts also showed empty subways in the city of Xian in China's northwest, while in Shanghai, the country's commercial hub, there was none of the usual bustle in the run up to the New Year.

"Festive vibes are missing," said a resident who gave her name as Alice.

In Chengdu, streets were deserted but food delivery times were improving, said a resident surnamed Zhang, after services began to adapt to the recent surge in cases.

Getting hold of antigen test kits was still difficult however, she said, explaining that she had been told the kits she ordered recently had been

diverted to hospitals.

In Shanghai, authorities said schools should move most classes online from today, and in nearby Hangzhou most school grades were encouraged to finish the winter semester early.

In Guangzhou, those already doing online class as well as pre-schoolers should not prepare for a return to school, said the education bureau.

Speaking at a conference in Beijing on Saturday, chief epidemiologist Wu of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention said the current outbreak would peak this winter and run in three waves for about three months, according to a state media report of his speech.

The first wave would run from mid-December through mid-January, largely in cities, before a second wave would start from late January to mid-February next year, triggered by the movement of people ahead of the week-long New Year holiday.

China will celebrate Lunar New Year starting on January 21. The holiday normally sees hundreds of millions of people travelling home to spend time with family.

Power, gas to get costlier

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The prices of diesel, petrol and octane are fixed by the BPC, which runs on a break-even basis.

However, between fiscals 2014-15 and 2020-21, BPC made profits of Tk 48,119 crore. But the state-owned company started losing money thanks to escalating prices in the international market following the Ukraine-Russia war that began in February.

Mbappe shares the limelight

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In just about 97 seconds, Mbappe made the boisterous Argentine crowd at the Lusail Stadium go silent, learing of not a repeat of the 2014 World Cup final when Messi and Co were denied glory for a whisker.

At first, he stayed calm to capitalise on Argentina defender Nicolas Otamendi's mistake of dragging France forward Randal Kolo Muani down inside the box to convert a penalty in the 80th minute.

Seconds after that, Mbappe showed why he could have the world at his feet in the coming years as he quickly exchanged passes with Marcus Thuram to drive home a sensational volley that had enough precision to have found the back of the net despite a slight touch of the fingers from a diving Emiliano Martinez at the goal.

Mbappe once again had to step up to bring France back into the game when a Gonzalo Montiel handball conceded another penalty in the extra-time after Messi had restored the lead for Argentina just 10 minutes ago. And Mbappe made no mistake this time either, showing nerves of steel even at the young age of 23 to become only the second player after England's Geoff Hurst to complete a World Cup final hat-trick.

Hurst was the first player to score three goals in a final when they beat West Germany 4-2 after extra time in 1966 and he was glad to see another player finally join him on the list.

"Many congratulations to Mbappe, whatever happens. I've had a great run," Hurst tweeted as the game

On August 5, the government hiked the fuel price by a record 51.7 percent on average to bring it closer to the rate prevailing in the global market. At that time, BPC said the earlier profits were ploughed back to cover up the loss in the previous five months and also spent a portion of money on the development works.

After the price adjustment, BPC still incurred losses of Tk 4-5 per litre, according to a BPC official.

"Consumers will have to pay the international price. If the international price is high, they will have to pay that price and if it is low in the international market, they will pay less," said Nasrul Hamid.

In India, the pricing of petrol and diesel is done through a 'daily pricing' mechanism based on a 15-day rolling average international rate, the exchange rate, tax structure, inland freight and other costs.

Mbappe's hat-trick at the end of his outstanding tournament will not erase the pain of losing to Argentina, but in time he will surely look back with pride.

"I'm sad for Kylian, who had a more than perfect game," said Paris St Germain president President Nasser Al Khelaifi.

"If it had been me, I would have given two cups - one for Kylian, one for Leo. He (Messi) deserves it and Kylian still has years to win a World Cup again."

It may have been Messi's night. But unlike him, Mbappe has much of his career yet to come.

12 killed as oil tanker catches fire in Afghanistan

AFP, Charkar

An oil tanker overturned and caught fire in Afghanistan's high-altitude Salang pass, killing 12 people and injuring dozens, officials said yesterday.

The incident happened late on Saturday in the province of Parwan, north of Kabul, leaving travellers on both sides of the mountainous pass stranded.

At least 12 people were killed and 37 others were injured in the incident, said Hamidullah Misbah, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works, adding the toll was expected to rise.