

DEFAULTING ON LOANS Poor get harassed while big lawyers defend big fish

Says SC
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday expressed its frustration saying while poor farmers were being harassed for failing to repay small loans, big lawyers fight to save people from repaying loans of hundreds of crores of taka.

A three-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique made the remark during the hearing of a "leave to appeal petition" challenging a High Court order that directed one Md Masudur Rahman and his three family members to submit the wealth statements.

The apex court expressed its frustration at the petitioner's lawyer after learning that the petitioner only repaid Tk 5 lakh against the total amount of more than Tk 115 crore in loan and interest.

As such, the Appellate Division dismissed the petition, meaning Masudur and his family members must submit their wealth statements.

Speaking to this newspaper, Sonali Bank's lawyer Shamim Khaled Ahmed said that Fazlur Rahman, owner of "Fazlur Rahman and Company" in Narayanganj, had borrowed Tk 32 crore from the bank in 1996-1997. Fazlur Rahman died in 2017.

In 2017, the bank authorities filed a case with the money loan court, which issued a decree of Tk 102 core in favour of Sonali Bank.

Later in 2021, the bank filed a "money execution" case for collecting the money from Fazlur Rahman's four children including Masudur Rahman.

In this case, the court sentenced the accused to six months in civil jail.

At that time, the amount of loan and interest stood at Tk 115 crore.

Masudur then filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the order.

The HC then stayed the jail order and issued a rule questioning the legality of the order.

During the hearing of the rule, the HC on May 22 this year ordered Masudur and his family members to submit their wealth statements.

Masudur then filed the leave to appeal petition with the SC challenging the HC order.

No objection

FROM PAGE 1
movement or struggle they do," she said.

The premier said this while addressing the award giving ceremony of "Bangabandhu Public Administration Award (BPAA)-2023" in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Hasina said no one would be allowed to play ducks and drakes anymore with the fate of the country's people.

"Keep in mind that the mental enmity has not gone yet from those who did not support us in our great Liberation War. We're progressing overcoming it," she said, adding that Bangladesh must continue to advance.

The prime minister asked the admin officials and employees not to be afraid of a little movement and struggle as long as the people remain with her government.

She said she didn't want to see anyone with a gloomy face, but rather wants to see everyone with a happy and smiling face.

The PM said it is normal that there are problems in life, but the morale and strength are required to overcome the problems. "If we move with this power, Bangladesh inshAllah will move forward. I believe it."

BB server problem

FROM PAGE 1
RTGS accounts for most of the daily interbank transactions, so the problem in the system has struck most of the transactions, according to bankers.

For instance, in May, RTGS accounted for 69 percent of the total interbank transactions amounting to Tk 860,000 crore, according to data from the BB. Cheques and BEFTN accounted for the rest of the transactions.

"We could not pay bills to our suppliers and clear salaries for nearly 10,000 workers and employees at the factory because of the problem in the RTGS today," said a top official of a leading plastic goods maker and exporter.

The glitch has also barred the company from adjusting its loans, he said.

Many children from poor families in Dhaka have never had a hearty meal in their young lives. They do not know how a mango tastes or how gratifying it feels to have a boiled egg. These are luxuries for them as their parents cannot afford nutritious meals.



PHOTO: THRIVE

THRIVE Providing nutritious meals TO CHILDREN

RBR

When these children are given a daily meal packed with vital minerals and vitamins, calcium, and iron, they flourish just like children from well-to-do backgrounds. It is exactly with this objective in mind, the three kindred souls at Thrive, a trust that gives daily tiffin to slum children, are moving mountains to ensure that at least some of the children's nutritional needs are met through a single school meal.

Thrive provides mid-day snacks to 10 urban and 3 remote schools and madrasas bringing under their net about 1953 underprivileged children from Korail, Gabtoli, and Tejuri Bazar in the city, and in Habiganj, Cumilla and Bogura.

The "10 AM" tiffin from Thrive, which is curated by a professional nutritionist and changes according to seasonal availability includes milk, banana, nuts or dates, and eggs – all brain foods that keep these poor kids alert, agile, and attentive the entire day.

"Most of the schools, where we provide tiffin are Jaago schools. Jaago provides education to these underprivileged children and we provide them the much-needed nutrition," says Sadia Moyeen, board

member and Bangladesh trust senior advisor, Thrive.

"What gives us immense pleasure is when we see the kids faring well, Jaago students who we are feeding since their kindergarten days are now in high school speaking fluently in English and Bangla. In such a poor country, like ours, even if these 1953 children can improve their situation, I would say Thrive achieved something," says Amna Rahman, board vice president and Bangladesh trust chair of Thrive.

"Since we are a registered trust, the entire funding is donation dependent. No corporate social responsibility programmes are willing to take up nutrition as their project agenda. Unfortunately, they are willing to provide computers but not a tiffin of milk and banana for these malnourished children," says Kanwal Bhagat, board member, Thrive.

The project needs approximately Tk 10 lakh a month to feed these children.

Moyeen says, "It wrenches our hearts to see a mother wait for a glass of milk for her sick child who missed school on 'milk days' due to fever. But we feel grateful to be able to give them a meal for the last 12 years. However, raising donations every month is an uphill task. We arrange funds raising walks and tea

parties besides holding our friends to their commitments for donation."

The three ladies, along with the local and expat volunteers, made it a point to go deliver the meals themselves until Covid-19 hit the city. Now, they have an efficient vendor, Direct Fresh, who buys, prepares, and delivers the tiffin to all locations in the city.

"Mishal Karim, chairman and managing director of Direct Fresh, has been a great support to Thrive and has come forward to help when funds fell short. Pran provides us with milk, Purnava Ltd gives 3090 eggs every week, Homebound and Sajida Foundation, Big W, and Far East Knitting and Dyeing Ltd are the backbone of Thrive," says Amna Rahman.

Thrive began as a tiny expat start-up by three mothers who arrived in Bangladesh in 2012. They saw hungry children and knew they had to help. Initially, they started to give bananas to 250 slum school children once a week. Now, 11 years later they are providing daily school tiffin to slum schools.

It is sad that big corporates or multinationals never include the idea to feed malnourished children in their CSR projects. Just a banana and half a glass of milk is all the nutrition they need to thrive.

Teen goes missing in Padma, family claims murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A teenager went missing after going swimming in the Padma River at Dhulsura area in Manikganj's Harirampur upazila, said police.

However, the family of the missing teenager Tushar Hossain, 17, son of Mosharraf Hossain of Sadar upazila, claims that he was murdered.

They said Tushar went swimming with his friends Sunday afternoon.

Later in the day, his friends returned home without Tushar and kept the matter of his disappearance a secret.

Later, in the evening, they returned Tushar's clothes and one of his mobile phones. They didn't however have his smartphone.

Tushar's uncle Aziz Khan said, "Why didn't his friends inform us about Tushar's disappearance? We suspect they killed him and threw his body in the river."

Harirampur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Sumon Kumer Aditya said relatives of the missing teenager lodged a complaint at around 11:00pm Sunday.

"We are investigating the case," he added.

Weaver hacked to death, his legs severed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday recovered the body of a local weaver who was hacked to death at a jute field in Pabna Sadar upazila.

Md Eliyas, 28 of village Jalalpur Notunpara had a handloom shop in the area.

He went out Sunday morning for work and since then his phone was found switched off, Pabna Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Kripa Shindhu Bala said, quoting family members.

Locals found his body the next morning at Dhopaghata village of Goyeshpur union and informed the police.

Criminals hacked him to death and severed his legs from the body, the OC said.

The reason behind the brutal killing is yet not confirmed but police are investigating the incident, she added.

"We have come to know that the victim had an enmity with a local trader in Jalalpur bazaar who had a criminal association."

No case was filed with the incident till the filing of this report.

13-year-old worker killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, MYMENSINGH

A 13-year-old boy died in a road crash yesterday as he was carrying out his duty as a construction worker in Netrakona's Kendua upazila.

The victim was identified as Sumon Mia, son of Abdul Barek, from Mymensingh's Muktagachha upazila.

Quoting locals, Kendua Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Abul Hossain, said Sumon along with his father was working as a construction worker on the Kendua-Netrakona road around 11:00am.

Sumon was run over by an unidentified vehicle while sprinkling water on the construction site and sustained critical injuries.

He was taken to Kednua Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors declared him dead, said the OC.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Junta extends emergency by six months

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta extended the country's state of emergency by six months yesterday, signalling a delay to elections they had pledged to hold as the military battles anti-coup fighters across the country.

The Southeast Asian nation has been ravaged by deadly violence since a coup deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's government more than two years ago, unleashing a bloody crackdown on dissent that has sparked fighting across swathes of the nation while tanking the economy.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing acknowledged that much of the nation is not under full military control, according to state media.

The junta-stacked National Defence and Security Council (NDSC) agreed to prolong the state of emergency that was declared when the generals toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's

government.

The "state of emergency period would be extended another six months starting from August 1st", state media quoted Acting President Myint Swe as saying.

Myanmar's military-drafted 2008 constitution, which the junta has said is still in force, requires authorities to hold fresh elections within six months of a state of emergency being lifted.

The junta had previously promised fresh polls by August of this year.

Min Aung Hlaing said fighting continued in Sagaing, Magway, Bago and Tanintharyi regions as well as Karen, Kayah and Chin states.

"We need for a time to continue our duty for systematic preparation as we shouldn't hold coming elections in a rush," he told the gathering, according to MRTV.

The army ruled Myanmar for decades after independence from Britain in 1948, and dominated the

country's economy and politics even before the coup.

Myanmar remains mired in weekly bomb blasts and fighting, with thousands of civilians caught up in the violence.

On the day of the announcement one person was killed and some 12 wounded in a blast near a checkpoint in the southeast, according to an official.

"The nightmare for the Myanmar people is never-ending is the one thing observers should take away from this latest SAC junta announcement," Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director, told AFP, using an acronym for the junta's official name.

He urged the international community to do more.

"The military junta is prepared to fight to the last to hold on to power, regardless of how much blood is shed and suffering is caused."

Chinese envoy quietly flies in, meets Momen

FROM PAGE 1

arrival or the meetings.

They said Xijun arrived in Dhaka on Sunday on a three-day visit, which comes after his two-day tour of Myanmar.

According to Myanmar media, Xijun held meetings with Union Minister for International Cooperation U Ko Ko Hlaing and Member of the State Administration Council Union and Chairman of the National Solidarity and Peacemaking Negotiation Committee Lieutenant-General Yar Pyae on July 28.

At the meetings, they exchanged views on repatriation of "verified displaced persons" from Rakhine State as well as regional and international matters of mutual interest and China-Myanmar relationship.

Xijun visited Dhaka on April 6 this year and had a meeting on Rohingya repatriation with Momen.

China is mediating the Rohingya repatriation.

Rohingyas have been saying that they have no guarantee of citizenship and safety in Rakhine State and the conditions in Myanmar were not right for their return.

In May this year, a group of Rohingyas for the first time visited Rakhine State. After returning to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, some of them said they were not willing to return. Eventually, a plan for repatriating nearly 1,200 Rohingyas was stalled.

The UN and some western countries say that the conditions in Myanmar were not conducive for Rohingyas' return and Myanmar first needs to ensure safety and security.

A diplomatic source said Xijun is discussing how to implement the pilot project for sending the first batch of Rohingyas.

BNP backpedals

FROM PAGE 1

"This Awami League government came to power by deceiving the country's people twice, without holding free and fair elections. However, it will not be possible this time."

Speaking at the rally, BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas said the anti-government movement will not stop until their one-point demand is met.

"No matter how many arrests the government makes, the movement won't stop."

The rally, which began around 3:00pm at Suhrawardy Udyan, was organised by the Dhaka south and north city BNP as part of the party's countrywide programme.

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, another BNP standing

committee member, said, "The judiciary, law enforcement, or government officials should not decide Bangladesh's leadership. Instead, it should be the right of the people of the country."

He reiterated that their movement would continue until Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government resigns and their demands are met.

BNP and its like-minded parties held rallies, organised by the Dhaka south and north units, in the capital and other cities and districts yesterday to protest the attacks on and arrests of opposition leaders and activists in Saturday's programmes.

However, fewer party activists were present compared to their grand rally of Friday.