

Illicit activities of SI Mamun

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When a police officer threatened to falsely implicate her son in a murder case if his extortion demand was not met, Korimon, a 98-year-old vegetable vendor of Fatullah, sold all her worldly possessions.

The six corrugated tins of the widow's hut, a calf and a tiny gold ornament fetched Tk 20,000, the amount Sub-inspector (SI) Mamun Sirajul Haque demanded.

"I gave the money to Mamun in two installments, once at the police station and then at his residence," Karimon, a resident of Kumarkhali village in Sirajdikhan upazila, told The Daily Star recently.

"I begged him to return at least half of the money as my sons had deserted me and my health was not permitting me to hawk vegetables anymore. But Mamun left the police station on his transfer without returning anything," she said.

SI Mamun was transferred to Rapid Action Battalion from Fatullah Police Station between 2004 and 2006. Once being posted back to the police station in October 2010, news of the extortion reached the local press club.

Fatullah Press Club President Syed Obaidullah and other journalists and locals came forward to hold a mediation and managed to recover Tk 2,000.

Obaidullah told The Daily Star that SI Mamun, before him and his colleagues, had assured to return the money to Korimon before being transferred from Fatullah.

But next month, SI Mamun was transferred to Tangail Police Station and he did not keep his word, he added.

What happened to Korimon is not a stray incident.

In 2010, SI Mamun arrested three local journalists -- Mamunur Rashid Sumon, Mohsin and Russel -- from a tea stall before Fatullah Police Lines.

Sumon told The Daily Star that SI Mamun took him to Fatulla Police Station and, drawing three Tk 500 notes from his pocket, told the officer-in-charge (OC) that he had caught Sumon red-handed extorting from one Faruque.

Apparently SI Mamun suspected that

the journalists were behind a report on the area's drug peddlers published in Sangbad Charcha, a local newspaper, said Sumon.

That day, Faruque, a well-known drug peddler, filed a case with the speedy trial tribunal falsely accusing the trio of threatening to publish fabricated news reports about him if he did not give in to their extortion demand, he said.

"In the case statement, Phensedyl peddlers Faruque and Mamun mentioned that Faruque's two cousins witnessed the alleged crime. But in reality, both witnesses had left for the capital early that day to fly abroad," said Sumon.

The three of them were acquitted by a Narayanganj court in January this year, he added.

When contacted on December 13, SI Mamun, however, denied even knowing Korimon and repeated what he had said to the OC.

Narayanjan Superintendent of Police Nazmul Alam told The Daily Star that they were not happy with SI Mamun's performance.

The story does not end here. SI Mamun is popularly known to many of his colleagues in Tangail as "Phensi Mamun" due to his addiction to Phensedyl, a banned Indian drug, and is alleged to be involved in illicit drug trading.

A top police officer in Tangail, preferring anonymity, said Mamun once had deliberately tried to cover up his recovery of several hundred bottles of Phensedyl in Tangail.

He handed over the drugs to be impounded only after departmental action was taken against him, said the officer.

Being transferred to Siddhirganj Police Station in January this year did not stop SI Mamun.

On December 11, he attacked and detained Amran Hossain, senior staff photographer of The Daily Star, and Sourav Laskar, staff photographer of New Age, while the duo were covering the opposition's hartal in Siddhirganj area of Narayanganj.

Mamun has been closed to Narayanganj Police Lines for allegedly leading the attack. An investigation by Narayanganj police is going on.



SI Mamun



Journalists on a hunger strike at Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday demanding immediate arrest of the killers of journalist couple, inset, Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

PHOTO: STAR

IMMUNISATION Bangladesh awarded for success

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For its success in conducting regular vaccination programmes and increasing immunisation coverage over the time, Bangladesh won the Best Immunisation Performance Award by Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) this year.

Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque made the announcement at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital yesterday.

The award was handed over at the "5th GAVI Partners Forum" held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on December 6.

Bangladesh received the award for best performance in routine immunisation.

Honduras, Madagascar and Nicaragua were also awarded in this category.

According to Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) coverage evaluation survey in 2001, 52 percent of one-year-old children of Bangladesh were given all vaccines, the minister said.

The percentage of immunised children rose to 80.2 percent in 2011.

Bangladesh was also conferred an award at the "4th GAVI Partners Forum" held at Hanoi, Vietnam on May, 2009 for its role in developing EPI programmes.

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Journos go on hunger strike for arrest of killers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists staged a six-hour mass hunger strike in the capital yesterday to press home their demands including immediate arrest of the killers of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

Starting from around 10:00am, the strike was held at the Jatiya Press Club premises, jointly organised by Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists, Jatiya Press Club and Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Addressing the programme, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, president of a faction of BFUJ, announced that journalists would stage a sit-in in front of the home ministry on January 1.

On January 20, they will also hold a grand rally in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club and abstain from work in all print media from 11:00am to 2:00pm. The electronic media will also observe a work abstention programme "in their own way", he said.

Iqbal said if the demands were not met

by this time, tougher programmes would be announced from the rally.

Sagar, news editor at the private TV station Maasranga, and his wife Runi, senior reporter at another TV channel ATN Bangla, were killed in the wee hours of February 11 at their rented apartment in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Journalist leaders also demanded arrest of and exemplary punishment to killers of all journalists, an end to harassment and assault of on-duty journalists by police and killing of journalists and attack on them by miscreants and ensuring press freedom.

On the October 9 naming of seven suspects in the Sagar-Runi murder by the home minister, Iqbal said, "As four of the arrestees are professional killers, we want to know who hired them and what their motive was."

Ruhul Amin Gazi, also president of BFUJ, earlier said no journalist would be safe if the killers of Sagar-Runi were not punished.

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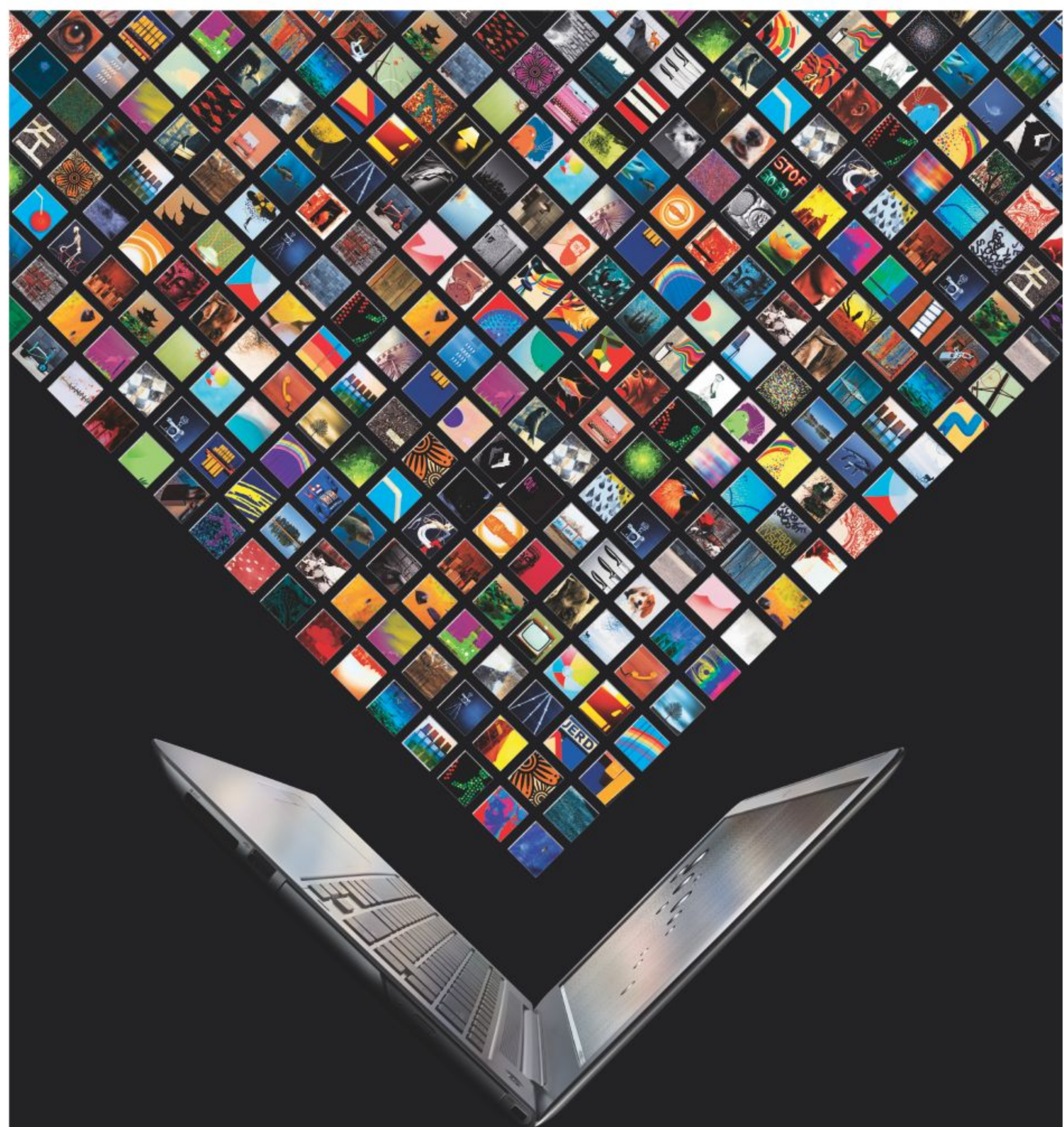
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