



'ABDUCTION' OF NBR OFFICIAL Sacked driver the key suspect

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent abduction and torture of a female official of the National Board of Revenue in the capital was carried out by her sacked driver and his cohorts, investigators have said.

The abductors also took her mobile phone and Tk 1.5 lakh from her possession, although they might have other motives, they added.

Prime accused Masud, the former car driver of the NBR official, is on the run. However, police arrested three other suspects -- Saiful Islam, Abu Bakkar Siddique and Yasin Arafat -- in relation to the abduction. All three are now in jail.

Meanwhile, the woman yesterday returned home from a private hospital, where she was treated for leg and eye injuries she sustained from the torture during captivity.

The abduction took place on the night of August 17 in front of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College, and she managed to escape the following day, 18 hours after the abduction.

The official filed a case against seven people on August 19, for abduction, torture and ransom, with Ramna Police Station, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner (Ramna zone) Salman Farchy.

According to the case statement, the abductors snatched away Tk 1.5 lakh and a mobile phone from her, and they planned to realise Tk 50 lakh in ransom from her family. It also said the driver was fired on August 1 for misbehaviour, and that he may have carried out the

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3 INT'L GROUPS 'Rights abuses' figure high in reports to UN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The allegations of repression of Bangladeshi opposition political activists and the press featured prominently in the submission made to the United Nations Human Rights Council by three international rights organisations.

The submissions are for a review of Bangladesh's human rights situation, scheduled for November this year.

The report submitted by the Asian Legal Resource Centre, Committee to Protect Journalists and Robert F Kennedy Human Rights (RFK Human Rights) detailed the number of BNP men killed in clashes since 2022.

Every four years, the UN Human Rights Council reviews Bangladesh's human rights situation as part of its Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

During the UPR process, member states of the council take stock of how Bangladesh is performing and accordingly make recommendations to the country, which can either be implemented or rejected.

The submission was sent for the 44th session of the UPR Working Group to be held in November when Bangladesh and 13 other states' human rights situation will be reviewed.

At least 24 BNP leaders and activists were shot dead, it said.

"On November 19, 2022, Rafiqul Islam Nayan of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the pro-BNP student body, was shot at close range by police as they arrested BNP activists who were distributing leaflets for a rally," detailed the report.

On July 31, 2022, police opened fire on a BNP procession in Bhola town. BNP-affiliate Swechchhasebok Dal leader

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People under umbrellas cross the Buriganga by a boat amid pouring rain. Crowded boats often ferry passengers without the necessary safety equipment, putting people in harm's way. The photo was taken at Dhaleswar Kheyaghat in the capital's Shyampur yesterday.

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Two Barguna journos sued under DSA

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Two journalists have been sued under the Digital Security Act in Barguna's Bamma upazila over a report on a scuffle between two groups of local ruling party men in the upazila on August 15.

The accused are Nesar Uddin, publisher and editor of The Daily Sagorkul published from Bamma upazila, and its reporter Mahmudul Hasan Ashiq.



Bamma upazila Jubo League President Saiful Islam Sarwar filed the case with the Barishal Cyber Tribunal on Wednesday, said tribunal bench assistant Nurul Islam Kankan yesterday.

After taking the complaint into cognisance, Barishal Cyber Tribunal Judge Golam Faruq ordered Bamma Police Station Officer-in-Charge

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Putin delivers mixed tribute to Prigozhin

REUTERS, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to the family of Yevgeny Prigozhin yesterday, breaking his silence after the mercenary leader's plane crashed with no survivors two months after he led a mutiny against army chiefs.

Putin's comments, which suggested he harboured decidedly mixed feelings about Wagner's mercenary boss, were the most definitive yet on Prigozhin's fate. Before he spoke, the only official statement had come from the aviation authority which said Prigozhin had been on board the downed plane.

Russian investigators have opened a probe into what happened, but have not yet said what they suspect caused the plane to suddenly fall from the sky northwest of Moscow on Wednesday evening. Nor have they officially confirmed the identities of the 10 bodies recovered from the wreckage.

US officials told Reuters that Washington is looking at a number of theories over what brought down the plane, including a surface-to-air missile.

The presumed death of Prigozhin

leaves Russian President Vladimir Putin stronger in the short term, removing a powerful figure who launched a June 23 24 mutiny against the army's leadership and threatened to make him look weak.

But it would also deprive Putin of a forceful and astute player who had proved his utility to the Kremlin by sending his fighters into some of the bloodiest battles of the Ukraine war and by advancing Russian interests across Africa which are now likely to be re-organised.

It remains to be seen how Wagner fighters, some of whom have already spoken of betrayal and foul play, react.

Pledging a thorough investigation which he said would take time, Putin said that "preliminary data" indicated that Prigozhin and

other Wagner employees had been on the downed plane. The passenger list suggests that Wagner's core leadership team were flying with him too and had also perished.

Putin paid generous tribute to the renegade mercenary calling him a talented businessman who knew how to look after his own interests and who could, when asked, do his bit for the common cause.



MYANMAR JET FUEL US expands sanctions Cites junta airstrikes

REUTERS, Washington

The United States on Wednesday expanded its sanctions against Myanmar to include foreign companies or individuals helping the country's military junta to procure jet fuel that it uses to launch airstrikes on its own people, the US Treasury Department said in a statement.

The Treasury was also adding to its sanctions list two individuals, Khin Phyu Win and Zaw Min Tun, as well as three companies linked to them, who are involved in procurement and distribution of jet fuel for the military, which seized power in a February 2021 coup, it said.

The Treasury said it was issuing a determination that identifies the jet fuel sector as covered by an executive order signed by President Joe Biden blocking companies outside of Myanmar from dealing with the country's defense sector.

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PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

DOTS AND SPOTS ... A juvenile panther grouper, otherwise known as the polka dot grouper, swimming through the Bay of Bengal in Saint Martin's Island. This striking fish is widely distributed throughout the tropical waters of the central Indo-West-Pacific region. Its peculiar shape, for which it is also called humpback grouper, is due to the fact that its body is compressed laterally and high, with a snout in the front. Its body shape and colour together help it camouflage itself. It often swims downwards in search of food and is highly predatorial -- it will eat anything that can fit into its mouth! Its colouration is more vibrant when it's young and as it grows -- which it does very fast -- their silver base dulls down. Unfortunately, the polka dot grouper has been given the "Data Deficient" status by the IUCN due to lack of information about its population and numbers. However, the fish is consumed widely in Southeast Asia, where it is overexploited. Due to overfishing and the pet trade, it is suspected that panther grouper populations have declined historically and continue to do so.

Jubo League leader arrested for assaulting schoolteacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole

A Jubo League leader was arrested last night in Jashore on charges of assaulting a primary school teacher in front of her students and leaving her seriously injured.

Mizanur Rahman Mizan, president of ward-4 Jubo League, was accused in a case filed by the teacher's brother with Manirampur Police Station on Wednesday night.

According to the complaint, Mizan's son, who is a third grader at Durgapur Government Primary School, went to the teacher's bathroom on Wednesday, said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

After the teacher noticed it and made the boy return to the classroom, he went home and told his father about the incident.

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Not even the poor spared by fraudsters

Criminal gangs use NIDs of the needy to run scams; 7 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Promising government assistance to labourer Farazul Haque of Thakurgaon's Baliadangi, two people took his photo, ID card and fingerprints in June last year.

The gang of fraudsters had a SIM registered in Farazul's name using his ID and fingerprints. They then opened an account with a mobile financial services (MFS) provider with the number and made transactions with money that the gang members collected through fraud.

Farazul has no mobile phone and the only thing the gang gave him was 1kg of flour.

Mirpur Model Police traced him in June this year following a suspicious transaction through "Farazul's MFS account".

In his statement before a magistrate recently, Farazul said four to five other poor people of his village also provided the gang with their ID cards, photos, and fingerprints in exchange for 1kg flour each.

Police learnt about the gang and its activities while investigating four cases filed over obtaining Tk 16 lakh through fraudulence.

Investigators said they found that the gangs collected IDs, photos, fingerprints of many other illiterate and poor people. They then registered SIMs and opened MFS accounts in their names.

"Different gangs have been using those mobile numbers to defraud people and opened MFS accounts for transaction of money collected through fraud," said Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Model Police Station.

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Norway opens world's biggest floating wind park

AFP, Oslo



Norway inaugurated the world's biggest floating wind park in the North Sea on Wednesday, an emerging technology considered promising for the transition from fossil fuels to green energy.

The Hywind Tampen field is made up of 11 turbines producing up to 8.6 megawatts each, providing five neighbouring oil- and gas platforms with about 35 percent of their energy needs.

The field located some 140 kilometres (87 miles) offshore began production at the end of last year, but was officially inaugurated Wednesday by Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon and Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store.

"We and Europeans all need more electricity. The war in Ukraine has reinforced this situation," Store said, quoted by Norwegian agency NTB. "This electricity must be from renewable sources if Europe wants to reach its climate goals," he said.

Unlike offshore wind turbines that are fixed to the seabed, floating turbines are, as their name suggests, mounted on a floating structure anchored to the seabed.