

8-yr-old house help found dead in city flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-year-old girl, who worked as a house help, was found dead yesterday at a flat in the capital's Central Road area.

Tipped off, police recovered her body from flat "EI" on the first floor of the building around 10:30am, said Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge of Kalabagan Police Station.

"We suspect that she was tortured before death," the OC said.

The police, however, are get her name and home address.

Mofizur Rahman, manager of the seven-storey building, said the girl had been working in the flat of Sathi Parvin, 40, for three years.

"This morning [Saturday], Sathi was looking worried. She quickly left and returned to the building several times, finally leaving at around 9:10am. She hasn't been seen since," Mofizur said.

"Police first came in around 1:30am, saying they had information that a house help died by suicide. But, they could not say in which flat. Later, they returned around 9:00am and found the girl's body laying on a bed in flat EI, with a piece of white cloth wrapped around her face," he added.

Mofizur said Sathi had been living in the flat, owned by her ex-husband, with her four-year-old daughter. She got divorced in 2020.

"But she didn't pay service charges and utility bills. Over Tk 3 lakh is due," he added.

Kalabagan OC Saiful said that they were trying to arrest Sathi.

The body of the girl was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Chinese national's body recovered from Khulna river

UNB, Khulna

The body of a 44-year-old Chinese national was recovered from the Bhairab river in Khulna city's Khalishpur Charer Haat area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Wang Siao Khui, an engineer of the 800-MW under-construction power plant inside Khulna Newsprint Mill.

Naimai Mandal, inspector (investigation) of Khalishpur Police Station, said being informed by locals, police recovered the body of the Chinese national in the morning.

The reason for the death could not be ascertained immediately.



Families evacuate Khitab Kha village in Rajarhat upazila, Kurigram, yesterday in search of higher ground after the Teesta overflowed its banks and flooded the area following heavy monsoon rains and the onrush of water from upstream.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Sign oath of allegiance

Putin orders Wagner fighters as Kremlin declines to confirm Prigozhin's death

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin has ordered Wagner fighters to sign an oath of allegiance to the Russian state after a deadly plane crash believed to have killed Yevgeny Prigozhin, the volatile chief of the mercenary group.

Putin signed the decree bringing in the change with immediate effect on Friday after the Kremlin said that Western suggestions that Prigozhin had been killed on its orders were an "absolute lie". The Kremlin declined to definitively confirm his death, citing the need to wait for test results.

Russia's aviation authority has said that Prigozhin was on board a private jet that crashed on Wednesday evening northwest of Moscow with no survivors exactly two months after he led a failed mutiny against army chiefs.

President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to the families of those killed in the crash on Thursday and spoke of Prigozhin in the past tense.

He cited "preliminary information" as indicating that Prigozhin and his top Wagner associates had all been killed and, while praising Prigozhin, said he had also made some "serious mistakes."

Putin's introduction of a mandatory

oath for employees of Wagner and other private military contractors was a clear move to bring such groups under tighter state control.

The decree, published on the Kremlin website, obliges anyone carrying out work on behalf of the military or supporting what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine to swear a formal oath of allegiance to Russia.

Described in the decree as a step to forge the spiritual and moral foundations of the defence of Russia, the wording of the oath includes a line in which those who take it promise to strictly follow the orders of commanders and senior leaders.

Western politicians and commentators have suggested, without presenting evidence, that Putin ordered Prigozhin to be killed to punish him for launching the June 23-34 mutiny against the army's leadership which also represented the biggest challenge to Putin's own rule since he came to power in 1999.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that the accusation and many others like it were false.

"There is now a great deal of speculation surrounding this plane crash and the tragic deaths of the plane's passengers, including Yevgeny Prigozhin. Of course, in the West, all this speculation is presented from a well-known angle," Peskov told reporters.

Dhaka, Tokyo in talks to ink defence deal

Says Japanese ambassador

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Japan may soon sign an agreement facilitating a transfer of defence equipment and technology as part of their efforts to promote regional peace and stability.

"We are in discussion on an agreement concerning the transfer of defence equipment and technology. We will not be able to disclose the details at this moment. However, the discussions are progressing in a positive manner," Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Iwama Kiminori, said yesterday.

He was addressing a roundtable organised by the Pan-Asia Research Institute (PARI), a Japan-based think tank, at the Japanese embassy.

Japan selected Bangladesh as one of the four countries—the others being the Philippines, Malaysia, and Fiji—to be the beneficiaries of Japan's new Official Security Assistance (OSA) programme. The two countries also agreed to appoint defence attachés in their respective embassies.

The topic was discussed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan in April this year.

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Joint patrol at Rohingya camps to continue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Law enforcement agencies conducted a joint patrol in the Rohingya camps of Cox's Bazar yesterday as incidents of crimes, particularly those related to narcotics and murders, increased over the last seven months.

More than 450 members of APBn, Rab, Police, BGB, and Ansar participated in the three-hour patrol out in different blocks of Balukhali 8 West Refugee Camp in Ukhiya upazila.

These patrols will be conducted regularly from now on, said Additional Deputy Inspector General Mohammad Iqbal, commander of 14 APBn.

The safety and security in the camp have deteriorated significantly in recent months since Myanmar-based armed groups Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and Arakan Solidarity Organisation (RSO) started engaging in violence to establish dominance over the control of narcotics and arms trade inside the camps, Rohingya leaders said.

Apart from ARSA and RSO, other criminal groups, including the Nobi Hossain Group, Munna Group, Dakat Hakim Group, Dakat Saleh Group, and Islamic Mahas Group, are also reportedly active in the camps, they added.

Some robbery, trafficking, and abduction gangs are also active in Ukhiya and Teknaf camps that have now become crime havens, leaders also said.

Six sued over deaths of 2 construction workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A site engineer was sent to jail yesterday in a case filed over the deaths of two construction workers who fell from an under-construction building of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST).

The site engineer is Hossain Ali.

Md Mofizur Rahman, a relative of deceased Tuhin Hossain, lodged the case against Hossain and five others with Pabna Police Station, said Kripa Shindhu Bala, officer-in-charge of the station.

The five other accused are GM Azizur Rahman, project director; Harunur Rashid, director of the construction company MN Huda Construction; Md Nasirul Haque and Mizanur Rahman, managers of the company; and site engineer Md Sujauddoula.

Police arrested Hossain on Friday night, the OC said, adding that they were trying to arrest the others.

Mother, daughter die after being electrocuted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A mother and daughter were electrocuted at Gobordanga village under Harinakundo upazila in Jhenidah early yesterday and died.

The victims are Morium Khatun, 65, and her daughter Taslima Khatun, 32.

Morium's husband Amjad Hossain said Taslima went to fetch water from a tube well which somehow was touching a live wire around 6:30am yesterday morning.

Her mother rushed to save her but in vain. They all died on the spot.

Officer-in-charge Abu Aziz of Harinakundo upazila confirmed the incident.

Locked in litigation

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In most cases, the illegal occupants re-occupy the land paying bribes to the influential and crooked rail staffers, meaning such drives actually increase the occupation rate, they said.

A TOOL FOR ILLEGAL OCCUPATION

On instructions of the parliamentary standing committee last month, the rail ministry prepared a detailed report on the land-related cases, and submitted it before the committee on Thursday, sources said.

According to the report, railway is fighting 2,076 land cases in different courts across the country, including 562 in the two divisions of the Supreme Court.

Of the total cases, at least 38 were filed by BR while rest were filed by different individuals and organisations against the railways.

Those sued by BR include Bangladesh Chemical Industries Ltd, the district administrations of Naogaon, Faridpur, Kushtia, Rajshahi, Lalmonirhat, Khulna City Corporation and Khulna Development Authority. Mayors of Syedpur and Ishwardi municipalities,

and Khulna Bus Malik Samity, among others, have also been sued by BR.

On the other hand, individuals are the plaintiffs in most of the cases filed against BR. However, several government ministries and agencies, including jury and textile ministry and the Kushtia district administration, also sued BR.

Officials of the Chief Estate Office and Divisional Estate Office – the two offices responsible for dealing with the railways lands – come from the admin cadre on deputation.

Sujan Chowdhury, chief estate officer (east) of BR, said people often filed cases when rail officials conduct eviction drives. Besides, many people sued the railways using fake documents to claim land ownership.

"Most of these cases have been filed so they can keep occupying railways land," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"When an individual can afford to pay even Tk 1 lakh for a lawyer, we cannot manage even Tk 20,000 for a lawyer to deal the cases timely," he said, adding that his office has only about a third of the 145 approved manpower.

Rezaul Karim, chief estate officer (west) of BR, gave a similar account about the grabbers and pending cases.

BR sources said there are only three posts of law officer in the 47,637-strong organogram of BR. Of them, there are only two posts for law officers in the two zones and a law officer at the BR headquarters, which is currently vacant.

"How can we deal with so many cases with this poor manpower?" said one official.

Asim Kumar Talukder, general manager (west) of BR, said the court cases are a major hurdle for them to recover the land.

He also said the law section of BR is too weak to put up the tough fight required for the recovery of the land.

Replying to a question, he said rail land often gets reoccupied as the rail authorities cannot put them to proper use in a quick manner, as the existing leasing process is time-consuming.

Rail Secretary Humayun Kabir and BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan did not respond to our requests for comments.

15 BNP men injured in 'AL attack' in Cumilla

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crude bomb blast near the city's court point area around 4:00pm, when BNP's student wing, Chhatra Dal, was bringing out a black-flag procession.

BNP leaders said they immediately detained the suspected bomber and handed him over to police.

The detainee was identified as Abdul Kadir Jilani, 25, from Sunamganj.

Sylhet police said they were probing the incident, and no case has been filed yet regarding the blast.

US sharing info with The Gambia for ICJ case

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international partners and NGOs to support Rohingyas courageously seeking justice in the courts of Argentina, and works with the civil society and members of the Rohingyas to document the atrocities and other abuses committed against them.

"We stand ready to support a holistic transitional justice process to address the long history of atrocities once such a process becomes viable to respect the demands of victims and survivors for truth, reparation, justice, and non-recurrence."

Zeya said the gradual loss of rights,

citizenship, homes, and even their lives in the years leading up to the 2016-2017 outbreak of atrocities made clear that the regime sought to destroy the Rohingya communities based on a false, discriminatory narrative of ethnic and religious differences.

"This false narrative attempted to obscure the fact that Rohingyas have been an integral part of Burma's society for generations.

"We must address the military's continued impunity for human rights abuses. And, we must support the fight for justice for those who have suffered."

water now.

Many affected residents have already left their homes and are seeking refuge in higher areas.

Farmer Nazrul Islam said Aman paddy fields and seedbeds of around 10,000 families in his village were submerged.

In Nilphamari, nine unions of Dimla and Jaldhaka upazilas have been affected by the flood, stranding around 5,000 families.

Rabiul Islam Shaheen, chairman of Tepa Kharibari union, said at least 2,000 families in his area were affected.

Abul Hossain, 50, Kisamoter char in Khaga Kharibari union, who took shelter at an embankment with his seven-member family, said, "With four consecutive floods this season, I have become financially crippled. I had to sell all my belongings to arrange food for my family."

BCL activists

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been disturbing her in many ways. Her classmate tried to protect her, but to no avail.

The victim said that around 11:00pm on Wednesday, the accused called her and her classmate to Room-606 of the dorm and hurled abuse at them for informing other students about the incident.

She added that at one point, they took away their mobile phones. When she felt sick after two hours of the ordeal, she was sent to her room with another student. After returning to her room, she lost consciousness. She was later admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

"An unexpected incident happened with journalists. We are trying to solve this issue," said SBMC Vice-Principal Nazimul Haque, who was in charge of investigating the torture of the student.

However, he termed the torture a minor incident.

This correspondent tried to reach the accused BCL leaders, Fahmida and Neelima, several times over phone and via WhatsApp for their comments, but they did not respond.