

Telegram CEO arrested in France

REUTERS, Paris

Pavel Durov, the Russian-born billionaire founder and owner of the Telegram messaging app, was arrested at Le Bourget airport outside Paris shortly after landing on a private jet late on Saturday and placed in custody, a police source said.

There was no official confirmation from France of the arrest, which French and Russian media have also reported, saying that Durov, 39, was arrested shortly after arriving at Le Bourget airport on a private jet from Azerbaijan.

France's BFM and TFI said that Durov, who has dual French and United Arab Emirates citizenship, was arrested as part of a preliminary police investigation into allowing possible criminality due to a lack of moderators on Telegram and a lack of cooperation with police.

Durov faces possible indictment, according to French media yesterday.

Yemen Houthis hail Hezbollah strikes

Renew threats to launch their own assault on Israel

AGENCIES

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels praised attacks by Lebanon's Hezbollah on Israel yesterday and renewed threats to launch their own assault in response to Israeli strikes on a port in Yemen.

"We congratulate Hezbollah and its Secretary-General on the great and courageous attack carried out by the resistance this morning against the Israeli enemy," the Houthis said in a statement after Hezbollah said it had launched a large-scale attack with rockets and drones.

The Yemeni rebels said the "strong and effective response ... confirms that the resistance is capable, strong and honest in its promise and threats."

The Houthis pledged to launch their own attacks against Israel in response to July 20 strikes that targeted a rebel-run port in the coastal city of Hodeida. "We reaffirm once again that the Yemeni response is definitely coming," the statement said.

The strike on Hodeida came a day after the Houthis launched their

first deadly strike on Israel -- a drone attack in Tel Aviv that killed an Israeli civilian, reports AFP.

Israel's response destroyed much of the port's fuel storage capacity and killed at least nine people, according to the rebels.

The Houthis are fighting Israel as part of Iran's so-called "axis of



resistance", which includes militant groups in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Since November, the Yemeni rebels have launched a flurry of missile and drone strikes on Israel-linked shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi yesterday

warned America's top general during a meeting of the dangers of a major conflict in Lebanon.

US Air Force General C Q Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Egypt hours after a significant missile exchange between Israel and Lebanese Hezbollah, reports Reuters.

In a statement, Sisi's office said the Egyptian leader told Brown that the international community needed to "exert all efforts and intensify pressures to defuse tension and stop the state of escalation that threatens the security and stability of the entire region."

"(Sisi warned) in this regard of the dangers of opening a new front in Lebanon, and stressing the need to preserve Lebanon's stability and sovereignty," the statement read.

Sisi yesterday called for a "decisive stance from the international community" and a stronger response "to joint Egyptian-American-Qatari efforts" for a ceasefire and hostage-prisoner exchange, which would enable a "path to calm and stability in the region," his office said.

EAST UKRAINE Reuters staff missing in Russian strike on hotel

REUTERS

A member of the Reuters team covering the war in Ukraine was missing and two others were hospitalised after a Russian strike on a hotel in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk.

In a statement, the news agency said that the Hotel Sapphire, where a six-person Reuters crew was staying, was hit by a strike on Saturday.

"One of our colleagues is unaccounted for, while another two have been taken to hospital for treatment," the agency said.

"Three other colleagues have been accounted for. We are urgently seeking more information, working with the authorities in Kramatorsk, and supporting our colleagues and their families. We will give an update when we have more information," it added.

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE Harris raises \$540m since launching her campaign

REUTERS, Washington

Democrat Kamala Harris has raised \$540 million in little more than a month since she began her race for US president, with a surge of donations flowing in during the Democratic National Convention last week, her campaign said yesterday.

A memo released by Harris' campaign manager, Jen O'Malley Dillon, said the \$540 million raised included \$82 million that came in during convention week and is a sign of Democratic enthusiasm for her candidacy.

"This is the most ever for any presidential campaign in this time span," she said.

Vice President Harris became a candidate for president on July 21 when President Joe Biden stepped aside under pressure from fellow Democrats concerned about his cognitive ability after he stumbled during a June 27 debate against Republican Donald Trump.

SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

China, Philippines clash in disputed waters

REUTERS, Manila

The Philippines and China clashed in disputed waters of the South China Sea yesterday over what Manila said was a resupply mission for fishermen, the latest in a series of sea and air confrontations in the strategic waterway.

The incident overshadows efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontations, including a violent clash in June, in which a Filipino sailor lost a finger.

The Philippines yesterday accused China of "aggressive and dangerous manoeuvres" to block the resupply mission. China's coast guard, meanwhile, said it had taken "control measures" against a vessel that had "illegally" entered the waters and repeatedly approached Chinese ships in a dangerous manner.

In the incident near the Sabina Shoal, the Philippine South China Sea task force said Chinese vessels rammed and used water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship transporting food, fuel and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.

For its part, the Chinese coast guard said the Philippine ship "ignored repeated serious warnings and deliberately approached and rammed" China's law enforcement boat, resulting in a collision. It added that responsibility for the collision lies entirely on the Philippine side.

No contingency system despite available funds

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After September 2022, when the initiative was taken, Bangladesh faced a number of cyclones and floods that severely disrupted telecommunication. If an emergency system had been in place, people's suffering from lack of communication would have been much less.

For instance, Cyclone Mocha in May 2023 knocked down most of the towers in Cox's Bazar, while Cyclone Remal in May left more than 55 percent of the mobile towers dysfunctional.

Were the NETS in place, the government would not have needed to spend about Tk 50 lakh to provide diesel to keep network towers operational in flood-affected areas in Feni at present.

The posts and telecommunication secretary was the convener of the committee and the director general

of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's systems and services division was assigned as the member secretary.

The Director General of the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) was also made a member of the committee.

Razwanur Rahman, the DDM DG, told The Daily Star he has not been made aware of such an initiative.

Md Mushfiqur Rahman, secretary for Posts and Telecommunications, could not be reached for comment. However, a senior official in the ministry said the initiative hasn't progressed much.

The committee was also supposed to present a budget proposal for the NETS in the social obligation fund (SoF) council meeting.

SoF of the BTRC is a fund designed to support the expansion of telecommunication services in underserved

areas. And the major contributors to the SoF are telecom operators.

But no such proposal has been placed at the meeting of the SoF council in the last two years, according to the meeting minutes.

At the meeting of the SoF council in April this year, which took place after one and half years of the formation of the committee, a project for NETS was proposed.

But in the next meeting, in late July, there was no mention of the project.

The meeting discussed the projected cost of Tk 835 crore for different projects in fiscal 2024-25. However, the NETS was not included in the list of projects, according to the document.

"The prolonged delay in implementing the NETS is a critical oversight, especially when the SoF is readily available," said Abu Nazam M Tanveer Hossain, a telecom policy expert.

Given Bangladesh's

vulnerability to natural calamities, a national telecommunications emergency plan (NETP) and system are essential for coordinating relief efforts and saving lives, he said.

Immediate action is needed prioritising high-risk areas, network neutrality and tailored contingency plans for different emergencies.

"This will enhance our disaster response and safeguard our citizens effectively," he said, adding that the International Telecommunication Union's Strategic Target 3.5 mandates that all countries have a National Emergency Telecommunication Plan by 2023.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialised agency of the UN responsible for many matters related to information and communication technologies.

The ITU provided a deadline to the

respective national telecommunications operators to come up with a detailed NETP by 2023, said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi.

The NETP is an overall document that includes not only the regulatory framework for disaster risk management but also all activities and actions that need to be developed and implemented in each of the phases of the disaster management cycle beyond the ICT sector.

In the case of any global pandemic or any other natural calamities, NETP plays a pivotal role in dealing with specific crises for a country.

Against this backdrop, the BTRC arranged a workshop with relevant stakeholders for developing a NETP for Bangladesh, according to Alam.

"Unfortunately, no effective measures have been implemented yet based on the

recommendations that came up from the workshop. We believe that immediate implementation of NETP will pave the way for smoothly implementing the NETS."

Forcing people

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according to a press release from the ministry.

He also highlighted the potential consequences of administrative disruptions, noting that teachers and staffers could face delays in receiving their salaries and allowances if the system falters.

Wahiduddin reiterated the need to maintain stability in the education sector with the goal of restoring discipline in educational institutions amid the ongoing transition.

He further emphasised the importance of maintaining proper relationships between teachers and students, saying that no one should be personally humiliated.

Mazumder, Sarafat's bank accounts to be frozen

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are the owners of the Bangla daily Dainik Bangla. Both men are big beneficiaries of the Awami League government of the past 15 years.

Mazumder leveraged his position as the BAB chairman to change critical policies for the banking

sector such that it favoured his businesses as well as take loans bypassing rules and regulations, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

For instance, at the 654th board meeting of Janata Bank in 2021, a Tk 261 crore interest waiver facility was approved

for two concerns of Mazumder's Nassa Group: Nassa Taipei Spinners and Nassa Spinners.

The central bank initially rejected the facility as Janata approved the waiver violating banking norms but later walked back on the decision.

To ensure his access to

the power centre, he would collect funds from banks and personally hand the cheque over to the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he said.

Sarafat, who hails from Gopalganj like Hasina, exerted his influence to get a host of facilities for the cash-strapped Padma Bank

and get a licence for a non-bank financial institution in a crowded sector.

The Anti-Corruption Commission recently started investigating Sarafat over allegations of seizing the Padma bank and embezzling Tk 800 crore from the stock market.

We had no clue

FROM PAGE 1

In Feni, several remote upazilas remained inaccessible by road, even as waters were receding. Mobile networks have not yet been fully restored, and many areas are still without electricity.

Locals said there is now a severe shortage of drinking water and food.

Meanwhile, three new deaths -- one each in Noakhali, Cumilla, and Rangamati -- were reported yesterday, taking the toll from the floods to 21. Two people were reported missing in Moulvibazar.

People started returning to their villages in Brahmanbaria, Lakshmipur, Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, K h a g r a c h a r i, Chattogram, and Cox's Bazar as the flood situation was improving there.

Many huts have collapsed and thousands have lost almost all their belongings, including farm animals and stored crops.

According to the disaster management ministry, the floods marooned over 10 lakh people in 11 districts and the total number of those directly affected was over 52 lakh.

At least 73 upazilas have been severely impacted.

The authorities opened 3,654 shelters, providing refuge to over 4 lakh people.

MISERABLE CONDITION Yunus Sikder, a resident of the Bangla Bazar area in Begumganj, Noakhali, said thousands were suffering from a shortage of food.

"I spent all my savings on food and water. Now we are forced to drink dirty water," he said.

Although the water has been receding, the situation remains particularly dire in Feni and Cumilla, where relief materials have not reached many remote areas because trucks broke down on flooded roads, and there is no boat to carry them.

People stranded in Cumilla were also suffering from shortage of food and drinking water.

In some places of Feni, helicopters of the army, navy, air force, RAB, and BGB are delivering relief goods to remote areas.

The floods have caused extensive damage to fish farms and livestock, with losses estimated at Tk 411 crore, according to the government.

[Anwarul Haider from Noakhali, and Khalid Bin Nazrul from Cumilla contributed to this report.]

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Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of The Executive Engineer, RHD Chattogram South Road Division, Dohazari, Chattogram. e-mail: eedoh@rhd.gov.bd. Memo No. 35.01.1582.414.36.01.01.24-1451 Date: 25-08-2024. e-Tender Corrigendum Notice. This is to notify for all concerns that e-Tenders are invited the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of works for the following Tenders. Interested persons/firms can see details by visiting the website www.eprocure.gov.bd. This is to notify all concerned that the following tender has been published through the e-GP portal. 1. Construction of 04 Nos. PC Girder/RCC Girder Bridge, 35 Nos. RCC Box Culvert and others ancillary work at Chaturi (Chowmohoni) - CUFL - Karnaphuli Dry Dock (Marine Academy) - Fakirhat National Highway (N-121) (Chainage: 00+000 - 15+000) with improvement of appropriate & standard width under Chattogram South Road Division during the year 2024-2025. (WP-01) Tender ID: 1005037, Tender Reference No. e-GPOSTETM/CSR/DEV-01/CUFL/2024-2025. Publishing: 29.07.2024. Corrigendum Details table with columns: Sl. No., Field Name, Old Date & Time, New Date & Time. All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged this addendum will be considered as part of the tender documents. (Pintu Chakma) ID No. 602219 Project Director & Executive Engineer, RHD Chattogram South Road Division Dohazari, Chattogram. GD-243