

Bullet-hit body of 'drug dealer' found in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police recovered the body of an alleged drug peddler from inside an under-construction building in Pabna's Iswardi upazila yesterday.

The dead, Altaf Hossain Mondol, 50, was resident of Schoolpara area in the upazila, said Bahauddin Faruk, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, adding that he was accused in 12 drug cases filed with different police stations.

Locals of Gokulnagar village noticed a body lying on the ground floor of an under-construction building in the early morning and informed the police.

Later, police recovered the body and sent it to Pabna Medical College morgue for an autopsy, said OC Bahauddin.

"He might have been killed in an internal conflict of drug dealers," the police official said, adding that they were investigating the matter.

A case was filed in this connection.

No progress

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Akram was killed in a so-called gunfight with the Rab on May 26 last year during a nationwide anti-narcotics drive. Later, Rab claimed that Akram was a top-listed drug dealer.

But family members, relatives and locals who had known him for years vehemently rejected the Rab claim. They said Akram, who was the Teknaf Jubo League president for 13 years, was a prominent voice against narcotics trade in the area.

During a press conference at Cox's Bazar Press Club on May 31 that year, Ayesha alleged that her husband was murdered in cold blood. She also gave journalists four audio clips in support of her claim.

In one of the clips, a female voice is heard continuously screaming over the phone hearing gunshots. Ayesha claimed that the female voice was hers and the gunshots were fired at her husband and that she was trying to talk to him on his mobile phone on the fateful night.

The clips went viral on social media, creating an outrage across the country.

Later, a case was filed with Teknaf Police Station over the matter.

Talking to this correspondent recently, Ayesha said Akram was carrying three mobile phones that day and only one phone was shown in the police seizure list. "They are yet to return the two other mobile phones and the motorcycle of my husband."

The seizure list doesn't mention the bike either, she said.

Ayesha also alleged that two months after the incident, a man went to her house and asked her to give him her mobile phone. "He was at my home for seven hours from 4:00pm that day, but I didn't give him my phone."

She then said the man also threatened her and that her family was passing days in fear since then.

Ayesha also said after Akram was killed, a minister talked to her over phone and assured her of a neutral investigation into the matter. The chairman of the National Human Rights Commission also visited her house and promised her daughters -- Tahiyat and Nahiyah -- of investigation and action, she said.

"But the words were not kept," she said.

Ayesha said her daughters, students of class-IX and class-VII at Teknaf BGB Public School respectively, still hold onto the memories of their father. "They often write or draw about their father in their diaries. Tahiyat always wears a watch given by him," she said.

Ayesha then took a brief pause and said, "I just want to know what was my husband's fault. I want to know why he had to die this way."

"I don't want any financial help or other assistance, I, as a citizen of this country, just want that she [the prime minister] would take steps to ensure justice," she said.

Contacted, Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday that the probe was underway. He did not say anything further for the sake of the investigation.

NY to London

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The creators hope the aircraft will be capable of a range of 4,600 miles, with a cruising speed of 3,300 miles per hour.

"We've set out on a journey to revolutionise the global transportation infrastructure, bringing it from the equivalent of dial-up into the broadband era, by radically increasing the speed of travel over long distances," AJ Piplica, Hermeus' co-founder and CEO, said in a statement on the company's website.

The Hermeus founders include former employees from SpaceX, Elon Musk's rocket start-up, and Blue Origin, Jeff Bezos' secretive space venture. All four founders worked together at Generation Orbit, where they worked on the development of a hypersonic rocket-plane and the US Air Force's newest X-Plane.



Flanked by civil society members, Nijera Kori's coordinator Khushi Kabir speaks at a press conference organised by the Nagrik Nirapatta Jnana at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Civil society members who formed the Jnana said a greater unity was needed to ensure rule of law, accountability, and justice.

PHOTO: STAR

Race to replace May hots up

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said former foreign minister Boris Johnson in a speech delivered Friday in Switzerland.

"The way to get a good deal is to prepare for no deal. To get things done you need to be prepared to walk away."

Johnson's main challenges will come from former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab -- viewed as an even more committed eurosceptic -- and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Britain's top diplomat had bitterly opposed Brexit in 2016 but has since reversed himself and made headlines in September by comparing the European Union to the evils of the former Soviet Union.

The contest is being held against the backdrop of European Parliament elections that the new Brexit Party of the anti-EU populist Nigel Farage is expected to win with about a third of the vote.

Polls show the Conservatives getting punished for their bickering over Brexit and finishing as low as fifth -- their worst result in a national election.

The contenders are also mindful of a party revolt over May's fateful decision to court the pro-EU opposition with the promise of a second Brexit referendum.

The field grew yesterday when

The concession was designed to help ram her withdrawal agreement through parliament on the fourth attempt.

But it won her no converts and sparked a party coup attempt that forced May to walk away before she was pushed out.

This prompted more EU-friendly hopefuls such as Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd to concede that they stood no chance and would not vie for the job.

"I am conscious the Conservative Party wants someone who they believe is very enthusiastic about Brexit," Rudd told The Daily Telegraph.

Johnson is a popular figure viewed by many Conservatives as the party's best answer to Farage.

But a long political career that also saw him serve as London's cosmopolitan mayor has made him enemies in parliament who will try to block his rise to the top.

Parliamentary party members will begin whittling down the field of contenders to a final two on June 10.

The finalists will go up for a vote in a ballot held across Britain by around 100,000 party members with three months' standing in July.

The field grew yesterday when

Health Secretary Matt Hancock entered the race with a promise to take a more moderate approach.

Leaving the European Union without an agreement is "not an active policy choice that is available to the next prime minister," Hancock told Sky News.

Hancock is viewed as one of the dark horses who might make it through a crowded field that is expected to include more than a dozen names.

International Development Secretary Rory Stewart is also positioning himself as a more consensus seeking alternative to Johnson.

"It now seems that (Johnson) is coming out for a no-deal Brexit," Stewart told BBC radio.

"I think it would be a huge mistake. Damaging, unnecessary, and I think also dishonest."

Yet neither Hancock nor Stewart would say if they would push ahead with May's current agreement or try to secure added concessions from Brussels.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte -- seen as one of Britain's better allies in Europe -- told reporters Friday that "the withdrawal agreement is not up for renegotiation".

Bring them back

FROM PAGE 1

With photos of their loved ones, members of some 20 families of enforced disappearance victims gathered in front of the press club under the platform "Mayer Daak", demanding their safe return so that they could celebrate Eid together for once in years. They formed a human chain there too.

Most of the victims had been missing since 2013, the family members said.

Yesterday, they were joined by rights activists, civil society members, university professors, and politicians.

They demanded that the government form a judicial probe body led by a justice to investigate each incident of enforced disappearances.

Between January 2009, when the Awami League government assumed office, and 2018, at least 507 people have become victims of enforced disappearances, according to the International Federation for Human Rights.

Of them, 62 people were later found dead while 286 returned alive. The whereabouts of 159 is still unknown, the Paris-based rights body said.

Speaking at the programme, members of most families alleged that their relatives were picked up by law enforcers, who have claimed that they had nothing to do with the matter.

All the while, the tormented families' search for their loved ones continued with no success.

For Rehana Banu Munni visiting morgues and other places has become a routine. She checks unidentified bodies to see if any of those is of her younger brother.

Her brother Selim Reza Pintu, a leader of Sutrapur Chhatri Dal, was picked up allegedly by law enforcers in plainclothes from one of his relative's house in Pal-labi on the night of December 11, 2013.

"We are dead inside ... We die every day. Make us disappear too or give them back," Munni said.

Shuvadra Chakma, elder sister of United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) leader Mikel Changma, who went missing on his way to Dhaka from Narayan-ganj on April 9 this year, fainted right after the programme ended yesterday.

Later, she said her family members were too waiting for her brother's safe return.

Marufa Islam, sister of BNP leader Sajedul Islam Sumon, allegedly picked up by law enforcers in 2013, said these people, who meet on such occasions, are well aware of each other's torments and have developed a bond.

"They all are waiting for their loved ones. They want to celebrate Eid with them," she said.

Speaking at the programme, Dhaka University Prof Asif Nazrul said it is the state's responsibility to find the missing people, bring them back, and punish those involved in the crime.

"But what are we seeing? The state is not taking up the responsibility. Police don't want to have such cases filed and even if they record them, they don't investigate them or submit any reports," he said.

He said there are reasons to believe that the state is involved in such enforced disappearances.

Noted human rights activist Nur Khan Liton said a dreadful situation has been created with enforced disappearances being used as a tool for torture.

"A few of the victims have returned, but they refrained from uttering a word out of fear ... Nur said.

He said all these people are citizens of Bangladesh. "The government should find them disregarding which party they belonged to."

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Zafrullah Chowdhury said these families have been appealing for years.

"But the cries didn't melt their heart. When there is no democracy in a country such a situation arises. It's not good for a nation," Zafrullah added.

2 Rohingya

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"The two women intended to travel to Saudi Arabia for Umrah on a Kuwait Airlines flight," Jahid Hasan, sub-inspector of City Special Branch Airport Zone, told The Daily Star.

"They managed to collect their boarding passes, but we stopped them before they could board [the plane], as their behaviour seemed suspicious," he said.

"As both the women failed to give proper answers during primary interrogation, we detained them as 'suspected Rohingyas' around 2:45am," he said. "Later, during further interrogation, they admitted that they are Rohingyas and belong to the Kutupalong camp."

"Jamila managed to get her passport using an address in Chattogram while Jobeda got hers with an address in Narayanganj," said SI Jahid.

He also said, "We are suspecting that a broker might have accompanied the Rohingya women, as we found some notes among their possessions, and that the broker managed to flee from the spot sensing danger."

Jahid further said that they handed over the women to the airport police authorities after filing a case in this regard.

This was not the first time Rohingyas with forged passports were detained at the airport.

Earlier on March 30, Armed Police Battalion (APBn) held four Rohingyas there just before they would board a plane to Indonesia.

On May 10, police's detective branch, in a special drive, detained 23 suspected Rohingyas from Khilkhet area in the capital. The DB team recovered 56 forged Bangladeshi passports from their possessions.

Power coverage

FROM PAGE 2

Sudan have made the most progress.

It said global electrification rate reached 89 percent; the number of people without electricity access dropped to around 840 million, compared to 1 billion in 2016 and 1.2 billion in 2010.

But the AL government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, achieved tremendous success in the power and energy sector because of its realistic roadmap with an aim to reach power to every household by 2021.

Talking to BSS, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said access to quality and reliable electricity is no more a dream as the country's 93 percent people are now getting power, which was only 47 percent before 2009.

According to power cell data, the power generation capacity of Bangladesh now stands at 21,419 MW, with power connections increasing to 3.32 crore while the number of power plants reached to 130.

According to him, police raided the area on information that a group of people were gambling there. Police detained four people from the spot. Abdul was one of the two who fled the scene during the raid.

Later, police came to know that Abdul was dead, he added.

The death of Abdul created an outrage among the locals. Several hundred agitating villagers gathered in front of the main gate of the upazila health complex and started protesting.

At that time, protesters and cops got engaged in a chase counter-chase that left at least five people injured.

The villagers later blocked Madhupur-Gopalpur road for around four hours.

Local lawmaker Tanvir Hasan and Superintendent of Tangail Police Sanjukta Kumar Roy visited the spot and brought the situation under control.

Abdul's body was sent to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police would take legal action against the culprits after receiving the autopsy report, said Amir Khasru, assistant superintendent of Gopalpur circle in Tangail.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee was formed to investigate the matter on the order of Sanjukta Kumar, superintendent of Tangail police.

The probe committee is headed by Masudur Rahman Monir, additional superintendent of Tangail police.

Modi appointed PM-elect

FROM PAGE 1

He underlined that his government will ensure safety and security of every citizen and work for the progress of India.

The outgoing union council of ministers had tendered its resignation on Friday night and Kovind had asked Modi to continue as caretaker PM.

PM Modi is likely to be sworn in next week.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi was adamant on resigning as president of the Congress over its appalling performance in the Indian election even after his offer was unanimously rejected at a meeting yesterday by the party's top leaders.

Rahul Gandhi, 48, told the Congress Working Committee, which consists of 52 members, that he would like to exit as its top boss nearly a year and a half after he took the job from his mother Sonia Gandhi, who was seated next to him at the meeting that ran four hours, reported NDTV.

"We have to continue our fight. I am and will remain a disciplined soldier of the Congress and continue

to fight fearlessly. But I do not want to remain the party president. It is not necessary that the president should be from Gandhi