

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 a resident of Schoolpara area in the upazila, said Bahauddin Faruk, of-ficer-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 Med-ical 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 in-vestigating the matter.

A case was filed in this connection.

No progress

FROM PAGE 16

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 Nahiyen -- 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 BCB 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

FROM PAGE 16

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 Nagorik Nirapotta Jote at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Civil society members who formed the Jote said a greater unity was needed to ensure rule of law, accountability, and justice.

PHOTO: STAR

Race to replace May heats up

FROM PAGE 16

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."

FROM PAGE 16

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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.

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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.

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"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 family," Rahul reportedly said.

The Congress said it "needs him", spokespersons and representatives said at a briefing that began nearly 45 minutes late amid reports that Rahul was firm on surrendering his status as chief to function as a party worker. Rahul Gandhi did not say a word as he left the meeting; he was tellingly not present at the press conference that was addressed by several Congress leaders.

"Party President Rahul Gandhi offered his resignation but it was unanimously rejected by the members of Congress Working Commission," Randeep Surjewala, a party spokesman, told re-porters.

Sources say Rahul Gandhi's mother Sonia Gandhi and sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tried to persuade him to change his mind. Finally, they said it was his decision.

"In a democracy wins and losses keep happening but providing

leadership is a different matter. He gave leadership," senior Congress member Ghulam Nabi Azad told reporters after the meeting.

Azad said party barons at the meeting, including former prime minister Manmohan Singh, urged Rahul Gandhi to continue.

The Congress has rarely looked beyond the Nehru-Gandhi family for leadership, against all reason.

The Congress held its post-mortem three days after its net worth in the general election hit 52 seats, just eight up from 2014, which was its worst-ever result.

The BJP increased its majority, taking 303 of the 543 elected seats announced Friday, up from 282.

The complete and total collapse of the appeal of the Congress was exemplified by Gandhi's defeat in Amethi, the constituency that has been held by his family for four decades and which elected Gandhi for three terms to parliament. In 2014, the BJP's Smriti Irani lost to him; it has taken her just five years to evict him from a Nehru-Gandhi bastion.

Prices of most essentials stable

FROM PAGE 16

The visits to the six markets revealed that fish prices have increased by Tk 30 to Tk 100 per kilogram compared to those before Ramadan. The markets are in Jatrabari, Kaptanbazar, New Market, Hatirpool, Karwanbazar and Mohakhali.

"Around 20 days ago, I bought rui fish for Tk 180 per kg. But I had to pay Tk 40 more on each kg today," said Moinul Hasan, while shopping in New Market area, on May 15.

Shopper Jamil Ahmed reported a similar increase in Mohakhali kitchen market.

He said, "Fish prices may go up in this season when supply drops. But I think Ramadan has left an impact because the hike is too much."

"If I didn't have to pay extra on fish, I could buy some fruits," said the gymnasium trainer.

Jamil purchased one kilogram of pabda (butter catfish) at Tk 460 in the Mohakhali market, which is about Tk 60 higher than the price in late last month.

At Jatrabari, medium-size shrimp was selling for Tk 650-700 per kg, which was Tk 550-580 two months ago. River shrimps are much more

expensive, at Tk 900-1,100 a kg.

Retailers claimed that fish prices started spiralling in wholesale markets at the start of Ramadan, while wholesalers blamed the rise on poor supply.

However, some buyers alleged that citing a supply shortfall, traders have increased the prices too much centring on the holy month.

Mohammad Shahin, a fish seller in Jatrabari, said they were paying an additional Tk 20 to 40 on each kilogram in the wholesale markets from the beginning of Ramadan.

"If the prices were low in the wholesale market, we would have reduced them here too. Sometimes the supply in the wholesale market is so low that we cannot buy enough fish," Nur Islam, a wholesaler in Jatrabari, explained the reason behind poor supply.

During summer, fish farmers dry their ponds before resuming cultivation with fresh rainwater, and this causes a supply deficit, he said.

He hoped that the prices would drop in two or three months.

Another reason is the ongoing bans on fishing, according to traders.

Ramzan Ali, a deputy director of the Department of Fisheries, said this year

they are strictly implementing the ban on catching small hilsa (jatka), which will continue till the end of June.

"We've imposed another 65-day ban on the catching of marine fish and crustaceans for the greater interest because this is the breeding period for sea fish."

The ban will be in force from May 20 to August 23.

FRUITS COSTLIER

Meanwhile, the prices of almost all fruits have gone up significantly since late April.

One kilogram of pomelo (malta) is selling for Tk 200-220 and a pineapple for Tk 30-60. The prices were Tk 120-130 and Tk 20-40 respectively about a month ago.

Apple sold at Tk 140-170 per kg before Ramadan. The price is Tk 230-260 now.

A retailer in Mohakhali market, Md Sarwar, claimed that the price of a carton of apple (around 10kg) saw an increase of Tk 400-500 in mid-May. "That's why we raised the retail price."

A buyer in Mohakhali, however, alleged that these are all excuses. "Most of us want to have fruits in iftar. Taking advantage of this need, they raised the price disproportionately."

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 to-gether 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 rela-tives 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 rou-tine. She checks unidentified bodies to see if any of those is of her younger brother.

Her brother Selim Reza Pintu, a leader of Sutrapur Chhatra 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 fter the programme ended yesterday.

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

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 in-vestigate 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

FROM PAGE 16

"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 realis-tic 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.

TRACKING SDG7

The Energy Progress Report 2019 showed that despite the progress, reaching the remaining unserved people, including those connected to frail and overburdened urban grids, as well as displaced people, and hard-to-reach locations, will be challenging. An estimated 650 million people will be left without electricity access in 2030.

The report tracks global, regional and country progress on the three targets of Sustainable Development Goal-7: access to energy and clean cooking, renewable energy and energy efficiency. It identifies priorities for action and best practices that have proven successful in helping policymakers and development partners understand what is needed to

overcome challenges.

Among the least electrified countries, South Sudan, Guinea-Bissau and Central African Republic have been electrified at around 3 percentage points each year since 2010. Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Nepal are currently among the fastest electrifying countries.

Maintaining and extending the pace of progress in all regions and sectors will require stronger political commitment, long-term energy planning, increased private financing and adequate policy and fiscal incentives to spur faster deployment of new technologies, the report underscores.

8 cops closed

FROM PAGE 16

Contacted, Hasan Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Gopalpur Police Station, denied police in-volvement in the incident.

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 Sanjit 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 police (Gopalpur circle) in Tangail.

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

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

Form judicial

FROM PAGE 16

"State institutions have their own laws and regulations. Why don't they follow those?" she asked.

The government should let people know whether the Supreme Court directive to form committees on sexual harassment at educational institutions and workplaces is being followed properly.

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori, said a culture of fear was prevailing in the country.