

Jubo Dal leader shot dead in Gulshan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals shot a Jubo Dal leader dead in front of Gulshan Police Plaza in the capital last night.

The incident took place around 9:00pm on the northern side of the road near the shopping mall.

The brother-in-law of victim Sumon, 35, said that he owned an internet service providing firm and that he was a member of the Banani unit of Jubo Dal.

Sumon was seen in an altercation with several others near the shopping mall. At one point, the criminals shot him and left the scene.

On information, police rescued Sumon and took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 11:00pm, said Maruf Ahmed, sub-inspector of Gulshan Police Station.

He said that efforts were underway to gather more information about the incident.

Sumon, who hails from Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur, lived with his wife and two children in Mirpur's Bhashantek area.

His ISP Priyojon's office was in Mohakhali's TB Gate area.

Top EU diplomat hails Trump offer to help Ukraine get air defences

AFP, Brussels

The EU's top diplomat Kaja Kallas on Thursday welcomed US President Donald Trump's agreement to help Kyiv obtain additional air defence systems, including in Europe, as its fights Russia's three-year invasion.

"I very much welcome the announcement by President Trump that the US is trying to find additional air defences for Ukraine," Kallas told reporters upon arrival for talks by EU leaders in Brussels.

"This is extremely important," said Kallas, who is pushing EU member states to meet a Ukrainian request for two million shells, worth five billion euros (\$5.4 billion) -- having scaled back a more ambitious proposal that included air defences and missiles.

Trump made the air defence commitment in a call with Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday, in which the Ukrainian leader asked for help in sourcing "Patriot missile systems" in particular, according to a US readout.

"President Trump agreed to work with him to find what was available particularly in Europe," the readout said.

The offer was a rare signal from Trump that he could help bolster Ukraine's defences as he pushes for a peace deal with Russia.

Ukraine currently has seven US-made Patriot air defence systems, provided by the United States, Germany and Romania.

Kidnapping saga of 25 days ends in grief

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However, the gang soon raised the amount to Tk 25 lakh, the officer added.

Milon's father filed a complaint with Thakurgaon Police Station the next day.

Milon's parents arranged the money by selling properties, and on March 9, they boarded the Dhaka-bound Ekota Express train from Thakurgaon Railway Station as per the instruction of the kidnappers.

"While the train was in Senua area of Piroganj, they threw a sack containing the ransom and two sets of Milon's clothes out of the window," police said, quoting family members.

Muhammad Milon

The kidnappers confirmed receiving the money but did not release Milon, said Inspector Rashid quoting the family.

On March 10, the Detective Branch began investigating the case.

Detectives arrested the suspects on Wednesday night. In primary interrogation, they admitted killing Milon three days after abducting him.

Police are looking for others involved in the crime, he added.

Meanwhile, locals yesterday set Sejan's house on fire.

They also kept Thakurgaon intersection blocked for almost an hour in the afternoon, demanding punishment of Milon's killers.

Police recovered Tk 4.97 lakh from Murad.



Students of Chattogram Polytechnic Institute blocked road and railway near Gate-2 intersection in the port city's Sholoshahar area to press home their six-point demand, including the cancellation of the 30 percent promotion quota for craft instructors in the junior instructor post. The blockade caused travellers to suffer.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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BNP infighting claims 43 lives in 7 months

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districts, according to an analysis of monthly reports of Aina o Salish Kendra (ASK) and The Daily Star's findings from media reports.

In seven districts, local authorities had to impose section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure barring public gatherings. The army was also called in to restore order.

According to statements of the police and local leaders, the key factors behind the violence included dissatisfaction with committee posts and competition for control of local businesses.

The BNP has taken disciplinary action against more than 1,000 leaders and activists on charges including extortion, encroachment, and infighting. Over 400 of them have been expelled, while at least 20 have been suspended, according to data from the BNP's central office.

BNP leaders say the infightings are damaging the party's image, giving its opponents a weapon ahead of the national polls.

"We have taken strict measures, but we still fear that such incidents will continue in the run-up to the general election," said a BNP standing committee member, who preferred anonymity.

Another standing committee member, Salahuddin Ahmed, questioned the credibility of the data on the deaths and injuries. Some incidents might have happened and those are undesirable, he said.

"Political rivalries do exist in a large political organisation. As the elections approach, this kind of competition and rivalry can be seen among the supporters of various candidates," he told The Daily Star recently.

BNP VS BNP
According to the data from ASK and media reports, nine BNP men were killed in August, 11 in September, one

in October, six in November, six in December, three in January, three in February, and four until March 19.

Nearly 493 activists were injured in December and 491 in September. Clashes were reported at least 41 times in December and January each.

Rafiqul Islam, 50, a former organising secretary of Titudah Union BNP in Chuadanga, was killed, and six others were injured in a clash between two BNP factions on March 8.

Rafiqul owned a small shop, and his wife Nahida Kahtun worked at a local clinic. On March 9, Nahida filed a case, accusing 36 people, including the union BNP president and general secretary.

"I want justice from Tarique Rahman. I saw my husband get killed right in front of me. It happened in broad daylight with many people watching, and they even cheered after he died," Nahida said.

"For 16 years, my husband couldn't come home because he was accused in many cases, but he died at the hands of his own party men," she lamented.

After the incident, the local BNP expelled the union BNP president, general secretary, and joint general secretary.

Political analyst Prof Dilara Choudhury said that the BNP is not the only one responsible for such incidents, and the poor law and order situation in the country is to share the blame.

"The BNP is doing what it can, but the government also has a responsibility. What has the government done so far?" she asked.

TARIQUE'S DIRECTIVE IGNORED
In meetings on February 22 and 27, Tarique warned his party colleagues of strict action if they undermined party discipline.

Despite his directives, factional clashes broke out in eight districts, leading to the deaths of five party men and a rickshaw puller, and over 150

injured.

The rickshaw puller, Golam Hossain, 48, died after being stabbed by BNP men who mistook him for a member of their opponent group in Rajshahi city's Dorikhorbona area on March 11, locals said.

"At the hospital, they first refused to admit him. I begged them to start treatment, but a female BNP leader told them not to. I pleaded with the police, with everyone. I told the doctor, 'Look at his face—he is not a criminal'. Only then did they admit him. If they had done it an hour earlier, he might have survived," Golam's wife Pori Banu said over the phone.

"I want justice, but where do I go? The police refused to take my complaint. We are poor—does justice exist for us?"

WHAT GRASSROOTS LEADERS SAY

Two BNP leaders were killed in factional clashes over dominance in Chuadanga in October last year and this month.

Contacted, Chuadanga's Darshana Upazila BNP President Abdul Hasnat said, "There are some evil people in the party who are committing these crimes defying party directives."

In Narsingdi, a Sramik Dal activist and a Jubo Dal activist were killed during clashes in December and January.

Narsingdi BNP Member Secretary Monjur Elahi said, "These incidents are not political. The party will not take responsibility for conflicts that arise from personal interests."

In January, the local administration imposed section 144 twice in Sathkhira after at least 10 people were injured in BNP factional clashes.

Satkhira BNP Member Secretary Abu Zahid Dabli acknowledged that internal conflicts were a major challenge for the party as the election approached.

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High season

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we must answer many questions from buyers and sometimes even face harsh comments."

In the same market, shopper Mizanur Rahman mentioned he bought soybean oil for Tk 165 per litre yesterday, down from Tk 170 just 10 days ago. Similarly, he purchased potatoes at Tk 25 per kg eight days ago, but the price dropped to Tk 20 per kg yesterday.

He was also able to buy four eggs for Tk 40, which was Tk 4 less than before. "The market situation is much better now compared to the week before Ramadan. If the government can sustain this trend, it will bring significant relief to the people."

Meanwhile, data from the state run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh also shows that prices have come down over the past week.

The price of a one-litre bottle of soybean oil decreased by 9.22 percent, palm oil by one percent, potatoes by four percent, local onions by 5.88 percent, local garlic by 25 percent, ginger by 6.25 percent, sugar by 3.29 percent, and a set of four eggs by 2.35 percent.

On March 19, the price of a litre of soybean oil ranged from Tk 157 to Tk 168, compared to Tk 174 to Tk 184 a week ago. One litre palm oil sold for Tk 145 to Tk 153, compared to Tk 146 to Tk 155 a week earlier, the data showed.

However, the price of broiler chicken has increased by 2.56 percent, and is now being sold for Tk 190 to Tk 210 per kg.

Potatoes were being sold for Tk 18 to Tk 30 per kg, whereas a week ago, the price ranged from Tk 20 to Tk 30.

Additionally, the price of sugar per kg was Tk 115 to Tk 120 on March 19, compared to Tk 118 to Tk 125 a week ago.

Abul Hashem, a wholesaler in Dhaka's Moulvibazar, reiterated that the supply of soybean oil, palm oil, and sugar has increased, while demand has decreased, resulting in reduced prices.

Hashem, also the president of Bangladesh Sugar Traders' Association, said the government had reduced customs duties and taxes on soybean and palm oil imports in two phases, as well as for sugar imports.

Since October 17, the interim government slashed VAT on imports of soybean and palm oil twice to five percent from 15. It also removed VAT entirely at the production and trading stages of the highly import-based commodities. As a result, import cost of edible oil fell from around Tk 18 to Tk 7 per kg, according to stakeholders.

The National Board of Revenue on October 17 also reduced the specific duty for refined sugar imports by 25 percent to Tk 4,500 per tonne to encourage imports and bring down the prices in the domestic market.

The cut in the specific duty for import of refined sugar came a week after the NBR halved the regulatory duty on sugar imports to 15 percent from 30 percent.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT Bangladesh slips 14 spots

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh slipped 14 spots in the World Happiness Report 2025 and is now ranked 134th out of 147 countries.

According to the 13th annual World Happiness Report, released to mark the UN's International Day of Happiness, Bangladeshis are happier than only 13 of the ranked countries.

Bangladesh was ranked 129th last year.

The report surveyed people worldwide between 2022 and 2024. The happiness ranking is based on a three-year average of individuals' self-assessed life satisfaction, as well as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, and corruption levels.

Finland was ranked as the world's happiest country for the eighth consecutive year, with locals and experts crediting its grand lakes and strong welfare system for boosting national well-being.

Nepal (92) was the happiest country in South Asia, followed by Pakistan (109), India (118), and Sri Lanka (133).

Afghanistan, plagued by a humanitarian catastrophe since the Taliban regained control in 2020, once again ranked as the unhappiest country in the world.

The United States fell to 24th place, its lowest ranking since the report was first published in 2012, when it had recorded its highest ranking at 11th place.

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87.5pc people left without basic services

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of the population, or 23.6 million people, remain food insecure in Bangladesh.

Inclusive development also did not take place in areas like good health and well-being as maternal mortality and infant mortality rates were still high in a few districts.

Discrimination is also found in the area of education as quality and inclusive education cannot be given equally to males and females and in rural and urban areas.

Dalit and Adivasi populations are trapped in traditional occupations due to entrenched caste-based discrimination, stigma and limited access to education and skill development, restricting their participation in broader job markets, he said.

People will not accept the pledges and reforms if the political parties fail to include those lagging behind, he said.

The government has taken up the reform initiatives but the representatives of ethnic groups, religious minorities and women are not kept prominently in the reform committees, said Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at the CPD.

Reto Renggali, ambassador of Switzerland in Bangladesh, said, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the SDGs is not only a document,

but it also helps to understand the situation.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the CPD, said every year, the international communities criticise the poor progress of SDG 17, which pertains to strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

As much as 60 percent of the time has passed and only five to six years are remaining for the implementation of the SDGs, he added.

Lamiya Morshed, principal coordinator for SDG Affairs of the Chief Adviser's Office of Bangladesh government; Saibun Nessa, partnership manager and senior programme adviser of Gender, diversity and advocacy HEKS/EPER Bangladesh; Pallab Chakma, executive director of Kapaeeng Foundation; Humu Khan, senior human rights adviser of UNRCO-Bangladesh; and Stefan Liller, resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme Bangladesh, also spoke.

Yunus explained that if political parties seek a limited number of reforms prior to polls, then the elections will be held in December. If a larger reform package is desired, then elections will take place by June next year.

"We have no reason to change the election dates," he added, emphasising that the upcoming elections will be free and fair.

He also shared that the Consensus Building Commission began talks