

Woman, teen granddaughter killed in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An elderly woman and her teenage granddaughter were allegedly killed by unidentified assailants in Bhabanipur village of Ishwardi upazila, Pabna, in the early hours of yesterday.

Police recovered the bodies of Sufia Begum Sufi, 70, and Jamila Khatun, 16, and sent them to the morgue of Pabna General Hospital for autopsy, said Md Mominuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station.

Sufia was found dead inside their home, while Jamila's body was discovered in a field about 500 metres away, he said.

At the time of the incident, no other family members were present. Jamila lived with her father, Joyal Khan, and grandmother, while her mother, Shirina Begum, resides separately.

Neighbours told The Daily Star they went to the house after hearing a noise and found Sufia's body. Jamila was later found in the nearby field.

Speaking to journalists, Shirina alleged that a local youth had been stalking her daughter. "Her father had gone to Dhaka, and the criminals took that opportunity to carry out the attack," she said, demanding exemplary

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Hundreds of passengers were stranded at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka last night as airlines suspended flights across the Middle East after the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran earlier in the day.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

Strengthen efforts to restore peace in ME

Dhaka urges int'l community

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has expressed deep concern over the failure of the discussion process in the Middle East and the recent intensification of conflict.

It called upon the international community to strengthen efforts to restore peace and create an environment conducive to dialogue.

"Bangladesh reaffirms that respecting the sovereignty and geographical integrity of every country in the Middle East is essential," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement following an emergency meeting last night.

The US and Israel have launched a major attack on Iran. In response, the Iranian regime has launched a wave of strikes across the Middle East, targeting several countries that host US military bases.

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam, Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Humayun Kabir and Foreign Secretary Asad Alam Siam held an emergency meeting to review the emerging situation.

During the meeting, they also spoke over the telephone with the head of the Bangladesh Mission in Tehran.

"It is our firm belief that conflict never brings a permanent solution; rather, the peaceful resolution of disputes is only possible through dialogue, mutual respect, and commitment to international law," the statement said.

Bangladesh called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint, avoid further escalation and strengthen diplomatic efforts immediately.

The statement reiterated Bangladesh's consolidated and principled position in favour of peace, stability and security in the Middle East.

US and Israel strike Iran

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reported one civilian dead in an Iranian attack, while four people were killed by a missile of unspecified origin in Syria, state media reported. Other Gulf nations reported injuries.

Countries around the world voiced fear of a Middle East conflagration after the escalation.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres condemned "escalation" in the Middle East, on which the UN Security Council will hold an emergency meeting at 4:00pm (2100 GMT). France, China, Russia, Bahrain and Colombia each led a push for the extraordinary Saturday meeting, according to a diplomatic source.

The first wave of strikes in what the Pentagon named "OPERATION EPIC FURY" mainly targeted Iranian officials, a source familiar with the matter said.

An Israeli official said Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian were both targeted, but the result of the strikes was not clear. A source with knowledge of the matter had earlier told Reuters that Khamenei was not in Tehran and had been transferred to a secure location.

An Iranian source close to the establishment said several senior commanders in Iran's Revolutionary Guards and political officials had been killed. Two sources familiar with Israel's military operations and one regional source claimed that Israeli attacks killed Iran's Defence Minister Amir Nasirzadeh and Revolutionary Guards commander Mohammed Pakpour.

However, Iran refuted the claims and said all high-ranking officials were 'alive'.

The renewed confrontation between Iran and its long-time foes dimmed hopes of a diplomatic solution to Tehran's nuclear dispute with the West. The latest indirect talks between the US and Iran this week failed to produce a breakthrough. The next talks were scheduled to start on Thursday.

The attacks came after Trump expressed frustration at Iran's stance in negotiations over its nuclear and missile programmes.

Trump said Washington's goal was "eliminating imminent threats" from Iran, and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the operation was to remove an "existential threat".

"We are going to destroy their missiles and raze their missile industry to the ground. It will be totally, again, obliterated. We're going to annihilate their navy," Trump said, warning of possible US casualties.

He also told Iranians the "hour of your freedom is at hand", urging them to rise up and "take over your government".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in reply, told Trump that regime change in Iran "is mission impossible".

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said all US bases and interests in the region were within Iran's reach and that the retaliation would continue until "the enemy is decisively defeated".

Iran's foreign minister told counterparts from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Iraq that Tehran would use all its defensive and military capabilities to defend

itself.

Loud booms sounded in the United Arab Emirates capital Abu Dhabi, an oil producer and US ally. Fighter jets flew around the Yas Island area of Abu Dhabi yesterday afternoon, and blasts were heard in the country's business capital Dubai. Falling debris killed a Pakistani civilian in Abu Dhabi, authorities said.

Bahrain said the service center of the US Fifth Fleet had been subjected to a missile attack. Video footage from witnesses in Bahrain showed a thick grey plume of smoke rising from near the small island state's coastline as sirens wailed.

Fellow Gulf Arab state Qatar said it had downed all missiles targeting the country and that it had a right to respond. Sirens were later heard in the capital, Doha.

Saudi Arabia confirmed that Iran targeted the capital Riyadh and its eastern region with strikes.

In Kuwait, an Iranian missile attack

the operation as the "largest military flyover in the history" of its air force. The military said the fighter jets dropped hundreds of munitions targeting about 500 objectives, including aerial defense systems and missile launchers across several locations in Iran, simultaneously.

In a video message published on social media, Trump cited Washington's decades-old dispute with Iran, including the seizure of the 1979 US embassy in Tehran, when students held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days, as well as a range of other attacks the US has blamed on Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution brought the clerics to power.

He urged Iranians to stay sheltered because "bombs will be dropping everywhere". But he also added: "When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin



caused "significant damage" to the runway at an air base hosting Italian air force personnel member. A drone also struck Kuwait's international airport, the civil aviation authority said, causing minor injuries to several employees.

Jordan's armed forces said they had successfully intercepted 13 ballistic missiles since yesterday morning in an operation that resulted in damage but no casualties.

Explosions were heard near Iran's Kharg Island. Iran exports 90 percent of its crude oil via Kharg, for shipping through the narrow Strait of Hormuz.

Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, the UAE and Israel all closed their airspace to civilian traffic, at least in part, and multiple airlines cancelled flights to the Middle East.

US embassies in the Gulf urged American citizens to take shelter, and in Lebanon, the embassy urged Americans to depart while commercial options were available.

The attacks raised the prospect of a rise in oil prices.

"If we don't see signs of de-escalation over the weekend, risk premiums could still drive Brent (crude) up by \$10-\$20/bbl (a barrel) on Monday," said Jorge Leon, head of geopolitical analysis at Rystad Energy.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army said about 200 fighter jets struck Iranian missile and air defense systems in western and central Iran. It described

Netanyahu said the joint US-Israeli attack "will create the conditions for the brave Iranian people to take their destiny into their own hands" and "remove the yoke of tyranny". Defence Minister Israel Katz called it a pre-emptive strike to remove threats to Israel.

The scope of the US air and sea operations was not immediately clear. The campaign is expected to last for multiple days, a US official said.

In Tehran, witnesses said people were rushing to banks to withdraw cash. Long queues formed at gas stations across cities. Many also worried about a potential internet blackout that would cut off communication with their families abroad.

Iraq's Iran-aligned armed group Kataib Hezbollah said it would soon attack US bases in the region.

The strikes, analysts say, proved that the June 2025 attack on Iran's nuclear facilities that Trump said obliterated those are not enough to prevent such attacks.

Since the resumption of talks, Iran's ballistic missile programme has been a significant sticking point, with Trump saying Tehran was developing long range missiles that threaten the US.

"Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime," Trump said.

Protracted war can weaken

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Canal, is very close to Iran and the war may affect the transportation of Bangladesh's exports to Europe and the US, he said.

Thirdly, Middle Eastern countries are the main labour market for Bangladesh and the long term war may discourage them from recruiting more labour, Reaz added.

Since the local energy security plan has not been functioning well, the country is mainly dependent on the import of energy, said Mohammed Amirul Haque, managing director of Delta LPG and president of the LPG Operators Association of Bangladesh.

Any long term war in the Middle East will invariably have a bad impact on the oil price, transportation of the LPG and availability of the LPG in the international markets, he said.

"If the war continues, we will be in a vulnerable situation," he added.

Long term war will affect the shipping of goods from Bangladesh as the country has already reduced the shipping of goods through the Red Sea due to the Houthi attack earlier, Rashid said.

If Russia and China get involved in this war, the shipping of goods will suffer a lot, he added.

"Of course, we will have to face the impacts of the war, as we are an exporting country, especially the garment exporters," said Mahmud Hasan Khan, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

For instance, the war will cut the budget of consumers as they will spend less on items such as garments. Secondly, the oil price hike will

increase the cost of production in the domestic markets, as Bangladesh is an energy importing nation.

Thirdly, if the local exporters have to choose an alternative route for carrying goods to Europe and the US because of the war, the whole trade will be affected severely, he said.

Bangladeshi garment exporters thought that the Ukraine war will be over within two weeks, but the war has been going on for four years now.

So, if the US-Iran war continues for long, the export markets of Kuwait, Iraq, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries may be affected severely, he added.

Bangladesh exported goods worth \$10.9 million, mainly garment and pharmaceuticals, to Iran's \$65 billion market in fiscal 2024-25, according to data from the commerce ministry.

Chaos at Dhaka airport as flights to ME halted

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US-Bangla Airlines has also suspended flights to Middle Eastern destinations, including Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam, said its General Manager (Public Relations) Kamrul Islam.

Multiple airlines operate on Dhaka-Middle East routes – among them Biman, US-Bangla, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Kuwait Airways – carrying thousands of Bangladeshi expatriate workers and other passengers daily.

Airport officials noted that many flights from Dhaka, including those bound for London and Toronto, use Middle Eastern airspace. Airlines will now have to reroute services, potentially increasing travel time and operational costs.

PASSENGERS STRANDED

Suruj Mia, scheduled to fly to Saudi Arabia on a Biman flight departing at 2:30pm, said the aircraft took off but returned about an hour later after an announcement that it could not continue due to a "problem" in Arabia. The plane landed back in Dhaka around 4:30pm, and passengers remained onboard for another two hours before being told the flight would not operate.

"They said the flight will not go now and asked us to leave two mobile numbers and contact the place we bought the ticket from," Suruj said. He returned home to Bhaluka in Mymensingh after waiting outside the airport, adding that relatives had already informed people in his village that he had left for Saudi Arabia.

Outside the airport, a group of 18 people – mostly women – waited with their luggage. They said they were garment workers travelling to Jordan on work visas and had arrived from different parts of Joypurhat for a Sunday 6:00am flight, but received shifting instructions.

Rita Rani said she had taken three months of training to prepare for garment work abroad. "I came from Joypurhat. Others with me worked in factories in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Chatogram," she said.

According to them, Jazeera Airways initially asked them to report at 11:00pm, later changed the time to 3:00am, and eventually told them to wait. "They said if the war stops, the flight will depart. If not, they will tell us later what to do," Rita said. The group stayed outdoors as mosquitoes swarmed them.

Golam Noor from Brahmanbaria, returning to Dubai after three

months' leave, said his MR Airlines flight could not operate due to trouble on the route. He fears that if the delay extends beyond three days, his visa may expire.

He said he would have to contact authorities within three days to extend the visa. "If I cannot return after coming on leave, I will fall into serious trouble," he said tearfully, adding that his family believes he has already left the country. He plans to stay at a hotel in Dhaka and contact his company by email and other means to seek an extension.

Shariful Hasan, associate director of Brac's Migration Programme and Youth Platform, said the fallout of conflict in the Middle East extends far beyond flight disruptions.

"It affects employment, the economy and remittances. Of our one crore expatriates, around 75 lakhs live in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The impact will depend on which direction the war takes," he told The Daily Star.

The expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry said the stranded passengers would be provided with overnight accommodation. It requested the passengers to contact the Expatriates' Welfare Desk or the lounge.

EMBASSY ADVISORIES

The Bangladesh embassy in Doha urged nationals in Qatar to remain indoors, avoid military installations and follow official instructions as tensions escalate.

In a notice, the mission advised expatriates to keep essential items ready – cash, Qatar ID, health cards, medicines, mobile chargers and dry food – and warned that sharing photos, videos or unverified information about the situation on social media could violate local laws.

Similar advisories were issued by Bangladesh missions in the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Iraq, asking expatriates to prioritise safety, stay in secure locations and avoid unnecessary movement or gatherings until the situation stabilises. Citizens were specifically told to steer clear of military facilities and open areas.

In the Musallah industrial zone of Abu Dhabi, several Bangladeshis spoke of fear and uncertainty following reported attacks near a US military base. Loud blast-like sounds were heard around 1:00pm local time, which residents believed were linked to interception activities.

"At first many people were outside

looking at smoke in the sky. But after emergency alerts came to our phones, everyone quickly went inside," one expatriate told The Daily Star via WhatsApp, requesting anonymity due to restrictions on speaking to the media.

Another described widespread panic. "Everyone here is feeling scared. There is a sense of uncertainty," he said, adding that emergency messages advised residents to stay home and avoid looking out of windows.

A statement from the Bangladesh mission in Abu Dhabi reiterated: "Stay away from the vicinity of any military installations. Remain in your respective homes or safe places. Avoid going outside unless absolutely necessary until the danger has passed, especially avoiding areas under the open sky. Refrain from unnecessary gatherings." It also advised keeping Emirates ID, passport, medicines, mobile charger, power bank, water and dry food within reach.

Meanwhile, after an emergency meeting chaired by Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, the foreign ministry said Bangladesh had taken steps to ensure the safety of its embassy premises in Tehran, its diplomats and staff, as well as Bangladeshi students in Iran. The government also expressed deep concern for the welfare of Bangladeshis across the Middle East.

The ministry urged Middle Eastern countries to allow stranded passengers, including workers, to enter once conditions improve, and said some governments had given assurances in this regard. Authorities have also taken measures to address the needs of stranded workers.

The missions shared emergency contacts for assistance:
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