

Two killed in Sirajganj AL-BNP clash over fish farming

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least two people were killed and 10 others injured yesterday in a clash between local BNP and Awami League groups over controlling a government-owned pond in Sirajganj's Raiganj upazila, said police.

The victims are Md Ismail Hossain, 70, of Kanadighi village, and Md Abdus Salam, 55, of Nakati village, said police.

Shamsul Alam, former president of Raiganj upazila unit BNP, confirmed that the two deceased were supporters of BNP.

Saiful Islam Khan, additional superintendent of Sirajganj police, said there has been a longstanding rivalry between the supporters of local BNP leader Abu Bakkar Siddique and AL leader Asmat Ali over fish farming in a khas (government-owned) pond in Goyalpara village.

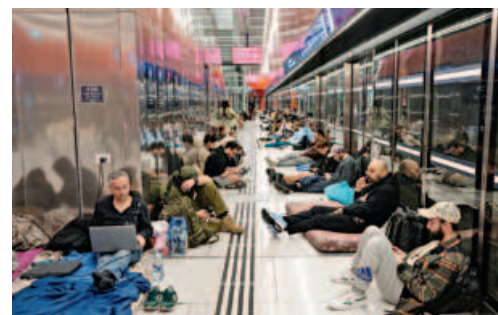
Witnesses said the clash broke out in the afternoon when one group

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(From left, clockwise) Smoke rises following a missile strike in Tehran; a burning aircraft falls from the sky in Al Jahra, Kuwait; smoke billows from Saudi Aramco's Ras Tanura oil refinery after a reported Iranian drone strike; people take shelter in a train station during an ongoing rocket attack from Iran in Tel Aviv, Israel; a security personnel attempts to disperse a protester in India's Srinagar after curbs were imposed amid protests over the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Photos were taken yesterday and late Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



Found with throat slit, 7yr-old girl fights for life

Case filed against unidentified individuals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

A seven-year-old girl is fighting for her life at Chattogram Medical College Hospital after unidentified miscreants allegedly kidnapped her and slit her throat at Sitakunda Eco Park on Sunday.

The child was rescued in critical condition from a remote hill within the park, nearly 8km from her home. Local workers found her severely injured and rushed her to hospital.

Her father said she had left home around 9:30am on Sunday to visit her grandmother at her uncle's house -- a commute she made almost daily.

Speaking to The Daily Star, he said, "We weren't worried because the distance is barely half a km. We realised something was wrong when my brother saw a picture of her on social media around 3:00pm."

Family members believe she was

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War escalates

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"During active combat -- that included attacks from Iranian aircraft, ballistic missiles, and drones -- the US Air Force fighter jets were mistakenly shot down by Kuwaiti air defences," CENTCOM said.

US President Donald Trump yesterday told CNN that the "big wave" is yet to come in the war with Iran, adding that Washington did not know who the country's new leader would be following the killing of Khamenei.

"We haven't even started hitting them hard. The big wave hasn't even happened. The big one is coming soon," Trump said, telling CNN it was unclear who was now leading the country.

He also claimed 49 Iranian leaders were killed in initial strikes.

Reuters reported on Sunday that many senior US officials remain skeptical the military operation against the Islamic Republic will lead to regime change in the near term.

In an interview with the New York Post, Trump said he would not rule out sending ground troops into Iran if necessary.

"I don't have the yips with respect to boots on the ground -- like every president says, 'There will be no boots on the ground.' I don't say it," Trump told the Post.

"I say 'probably don't need them,' [or] 'if they were necessary,'" he said.

The US president also sought to counter criticism that his war on Iran lacked a clear purpose, listing four explicit goals.

"First, we're destroying Iran's missile capabilities... Second, we're annihilating their navy... Third, we're ensuring that the world's number-one sponsor of terror can never obtain a nuclear weapon.

"Finally, we are ensuring the Iranian regime can't continue to arm, fund and direct terrorist armies outside of their borders," he said.

"We're already substantially ahead of our time projections," Trump said at the White House on a possible timeframe of the operations, adding: "From the beginning, we projected four to five weeks, but we have capability to go far longer than that. We'll do it."

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth told reporters that no US troops were yet on the ground in Iran, but added: "We'll go as far as we need to go."

However, he played down concerns that the US attack on Iran risked plunging the US into a new, open-ended conflict in the Middle East, even as officials declined to offer a timeline and cautioned that they expected more US casualties.

The United States and Israel launched their most ambitious attacks on Iran in decades on Saturday, killing

Khamenei, sinking Iranian warships and hitting more than 1,000 targets so far.

"To the media outlets and political left screaming 'ENDLESS WARS' -- stop. This is not Iraq. This is not endless," said Hegseth, a former Fox News host and Army veteran who served in Iraq from 2005 to 2006 and deployed to Afghanistan in 2012.

Ali Larjani, the powerful head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, voiced defiance, vowing that Iran would defend itself "regardless of the costs and will make the enemies sorry for their miscalculation". He also ruled out any negotiations with the US.

"Iran, unlike the United States, has prepared itself for a long war," said Larjani in a post on X.

A total of 555 people have been killed across Iran in the conflict so far, the Iranian Red Crescent said yesterday.

"Following the Zionist-American terrorist attacks carried out in various regions of our country, 131 cities have been affected to date and, regrettably, 555 of our compatriots have been killed," the humanitarian group said in a post on Telegram.

Four US service personnel were reported to have died, and Trump urged Americans to grieve their loss. But the campaign could pose a major political risk for the Republican Party in this year's midterm elections, with only one in four Americans supporting the operation, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll over the weekend.

The attack on Iran has pitched the Gulf into war, thrown global air transport into chaos and shut down shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, where a fifth of the world's oil trade skirts the Iranian coast, sending oil prices surging.

Qatar, one of the world's biggest exporters of liquefied natural gas, halted production, with no prospect of being able to ship safely through the chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi Arabia shut its biggest refinery after drone strikes caused a fire there, one of a number of energy installations that became targets.

Meanwhile, an Iranian drone hit the runway of a UK air force base in Akrotiri in Cyprus, whose government announced that the major airport in its town of Paphos and the area around the British facility would be evacuated.

A Cypriot government spokesman said two more drones targeting the base were "dealt with in a timely manner", and Greece announced it was deploying frigates and jets to help protect Cyprus, a fellow EU member.

In Lebanon, the strikes have triggered a new round of violence between Israel and Hezbollah, with the Iran-backed group firing rockets and

its enemy responding with bombing.

"We will end this campaign with not just Iran being struck but with Hezbollah suffering a devastating blow," Israel's army chief Eyal Zamir said.

As Lebanon, which had vowed to disarm Hezbollah, was dragged into the war, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam announced "the immediate ban of all Hezbollah security and military activities", deeming them "illegal".

Explosions rocked Beirut, while in southern Lebanon residents fled, according to AFP journalists, after the Israeli military announced it was striking several parts of the country.

The Israeli military said it had struck a senior Hezbollah operative in Beirut, while Lebanese authorities said Israeli strikes killed at least 52 people and wounded 154.

As the war escalated, calls for de-escalation also grew.

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday urged a ceasefire in the Middle East during phone calls with the leaders of several Gulf states. Putin held calls with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as well as with the leaders of the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain.

Meanwhile, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart on a call that Beijing supports Tehran defending itself against US-Israeli strikes.

China had "urged the US and Israel to immediately cease military operations, avoid further escalation of tensions and prevent the conflict from spreading to the entire Middle East region", Wang said, according to CCTV.

In a separate phone call with Oman's foreign minister, Wang accused the United States and Israel of "violating the purposes and principles of the UN charter" by "deliberately instigating a war against Iran".

Turkey joined Russia and China in condemning the operation, which President Tayyip Erdogan called a "clear violation" of international law.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said he had spoken with his Israeli counterpart and urged an "early" end to the conflict after strikes on Iran.

In the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that is key to global oil transit, three ships were attacked on Sunday after Iran had previously warned vessels against crossing.

Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have urged Iranians to overthrow the government in Tehran, the sworn foe of Israel and the United States since the 1979 Islamic revolution toppled the pro-Western shah.

becomes prolonged, Bangladesh will face pressure. Greater reliance on alternative sources could drive up prices and intensify supply risks," he told The Daily Star.

Iran's indication that it has no immediate plan to close the Strait of Hormuz is a positive signal for import-dependent countries like Bangladesh.

In the BPC's stock, furnace oil remains at 78,278 tonnes, which is required in power plants and industries.

As per the BPC's calculation, the stock is enough to meet two months' demand.

Most of the power plants import their oil by themselves and they were supposed to complete their preparation for summer, officials said.

"We don't have exact data but there may not be any problem in this regard," said a BPC official.

Over 100 Bangladeshis sent

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"They want to bury their sons properly," Quinley said. "They are still waiting."

The report documents a pattern of recruitment that begins not with ideology, but with desperation.

Many of the men paid brokers between \$1,000 and \$5,000 per person, believing they were securing overseas jobs. Some thought they would work in factories in Europe. Others believed they would take up non-combat roles linked to the military.

Instead, several were routed through countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates before being taken to Russia.

CONTRACTS IN RUSSIAN
According to the researchers, the men could not read the documents written completely in the Russian language, were not provided translators or legal assistance, and signed without fully understanding they were enlisting in a war.

"They were not given informed consent," Quinley said.

One Bangladeshi man told researchers he had signed up, hoping to send money home to his impoverished family. He believed he would serve in a support role. After arrival, he was deployed to occupied Ukraine and sent to the front lines.

When he pleaded to return home, he was beaten by commanders after disagreements, the report says.

Forty Rights later interviewed him after he managed to return to Bangladesh. He said others with him could not return.

FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION
The financial promises also often collapsed. Recruits were told they could earn around \$2,000 per month, according to the findings.

In many cases, however, they were paid less than promised or not paid at all. Some were forced to use whatever money they earned inside Russia and were unable to send funds back home.

"In many situations, people paid for a job opportunity," Pokalchuk said. "But they found themselves on the battlefield

with the risk of being injured or killed."

Truth Hounds said similar patterns have been documented in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and India, with foreign nationals now among prisoners of war in Ukraine.

Bangladeshi anti-trafficking police told the researchers that coercive practices had been used by recruitment agencies. This contrasts with earlier claims by some Bangladeshi authorities that those who travelled to Russia did so of their own will.

The report does not name specific brokers or map the full network but concludes that organised recruitment and smuggling operations were involved. Russian authorities, the researchers said, are also implicated because recruits formally signed military documents upon arrival.

So far in 2026, the groups say they have not documented new confirmed cases of recruitment. They noted that Bangladeshi authorities have strengthened monitoring at entry and exit points but cautioned that trafficking networks could adapt.

The report urges the Bangladesh government to crack down on recruitment agencies, strengthen anti-trafficking coordination between police and civil society, and provide better support for survivors returning home.

It also calls on the government to press more forcefully for the return of bodies and to take a clearer stance on Russia's war.

For families in Bangladesh, the issue is less about geopolitics and more about loss.

Young men who left to earn a living have come back injured or traumatised -- if they returned at all. Some families borrowed heavily to pay brokers. In several cases, they lost both their savings and their sons.

"What we see is the exploitation of poverty," Quinley said. "Without stronger action, more Bangladeshis could be drawn into similar schemes."

The war is being fought thousands of miles away. But for some households in Bangladesh, its consequences are now painfully close to home.

NUMBERS COULD BE HIGHER

Regarding the aforesaid reports of 34 deaths of Bangladeshis in the frontline, Shariful Hasan, associate director of BRAC's Migration Programme and Youth Platform, said the number cited in the report is likely a minimum estimate and that the actual figure could be significantly higher.

"Our concern is much greater," he said. "Based on our observations, this number is at least the minimum. We believe more Bangladeshis have gone than what has been identified so far."

"Especially from a few areas of Bangladesh -- Noakhali, Lakshimpur and Mymensingh -- the number of people who went seems substantial. Our concern is that the figure may be close to a thousand or even exceed a thousand," Shariful told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added that BRAC had received multiple requests from families seeking assistance to bring back the bodies of those killed.

"It is true that we have submitted requests in several cases to bring back dead bodies at the request of families," he said. "But the bodies have not been returned."

Shariful said the realities of a large and active war zone make repatriation extremely difficult.

"In such a large battlefield, it is often not possible to retrieve bodies. The situation makes it practically impossible in many cases," he said.

Citing what BRAC has learned, he said many Bangladeshis -- along with some African nationals -- were reportedly placed on the front lines and used in highly vulnerable positions.

"We have come to know that some Bangladeshis and Africans were kept at the very front and used effectively as shields," he said. "They had no knowledge of warfare, no training, yet were placed in front line combat positions. That is why the number of deaths appears to be high."

"It is unfortunate that the government did not appear to take sufficient initiative to raise awareness or act proactively on this issue," Shariful added.

'Regime change unlikely in Iran'

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No officials consulted by Reuters completely ruled out the possibility of the fall of Iran's government, which currently is buffeted by key personnel losses from ongoing US and Israeli air strikes and is deeply unpopular following a January round of extraordinarily violent repression.

But it is far from likely or even probable in the near term, they said.

Reuters reported earlier that Central Intelligence Agency assessments presented to the White House in the weeks before the Iran attack concluded that if Khamenei was killed, he could be replaced by hard-line figures from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or equally hard-line clerics, two sources said.

One US official with knowledge of internal White House deliberations said IRGC officials are unlikely to voluntarily

capitulate in part because they have benefited from a vast patronage network designed to maintain internal loyalty.

The CIA assessments followed at least one report from a separate US intelligence agency which noted that there had been no IRGC defections during a massive round of anti-government protests in January that was met with brutal force by Iranian security forces.

Such defections would likely be a precondition of any successful revolution, according to three additional sources. Those sources requested that the specific intelligence agency not be named.

All of the sources Reuters spoke with for this story requested anonymity to discuss intelligence assessments.

The US intelligence discussions about the implications of a possible

Khamenei killing have not been limited to whether it might lead to a change in government leadership.

Two of the US officials said that, since January, there has been significant debate -- but no consensus -- among officials of various agencies about the extent to which Khamenei's killing would lead to a significant shift in the way Iran approached negotiations with the US regarding its nuclear program.

US officials have also debated the extent to which Khamenei's death or ouster would deter the country from rebuilding its missile or nuclear facilities and capacities, said those officials.

Senior US officials have also become increasingly pessimistic that any opposition figure backed by Washington would realistically be able to control the country, those officials added.

Fuel stocks adequate

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continue," he said.

Bangladesh depends on imports for nearly all of its refined petroleum products, while crude oil makes up about a fifth of the total supply, processed domestically at the refinery.

As much as 65 percent of the country's piped gas supply needs are met from the local fields, with the remainder met through imports.

Of the LNG import, the country mostly depends on the government-to-government deals with Qatar (65 percent), which requires it to use the Strait of Hormuz.

Nine liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargoes are scheduled to arrive this month, with six coming from Qatar, said Petrobangla officials.

Four have already crossed the Strait, said Petrobangla Chairman Mohammad Erfanul Haque yesterday.

"So there is no risk regarding

those cargoes," he said, adding that the authorities are also in touch with alternative suppliers in case of any disruption.

Meanwhile, the country's reliance on Middle Eastern LPG has fallen sharply.

While 76 percent of the LPG imports passed through the Strait of Hormuz in fiscal 2024-25, that share has dropped to 25 percent in the first two months this year.

At present, 62 percent of LPG imports are being sourced from the US.

The reduced dependence on the Middle East lowers the immediate risk of disruption in the LPG sector, said Md Rokunujjaman, head of sales at Omera Petroleum.

"Imports have increased slightly compared to previous months, and a major portion now comes from the US. However, if the Middle East crisis

BNP offers deputy speaker post

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constitution, established practice and tradition still require the president to deliver the address on the first day of the first session of a new parliament and at the beginning of the parliamentary year.

If any future constitutional amendment changes the provision, it could be considered then.

On constitutional reform, Salahuddin said members who have taken oath as lawmakers would join the House as MPs, and only they would be entitled to participate in its proceedings.

"There is no provision in the constitution for a Constitutional Reform Council," he said.

"Those who have taken oath as members of such a council have done

so on their own. But they cannot participate in the national parliament in that capacity. Only members of parliament can take part."

He said discussions on constitutional reform in seminars and public forums were part of political rights and anyone could raise demands.

"But we cannot place anything unconstitutional in the national parliament."

"If a constitutional amendment is brought and incorporated into the constitution, then all aspects must be specified -- who will take oath as members, who will administer the oath and in what form," Salahuddin said.

"These are long processes and matters for discussion." Salahuddin said he learnt that a

petition was moved before the High Court challenging the Constitutional Reform Order 2025, claiming it violated the constitution and was "ultra vires".

"Let us see what opinion comes from the judiciary. We can take that into discussion in parliament. All such matters will be considered lawfully and constitutionally through parliamentary debate. That is a democratic practice," he said.

On ordinances promulgated during the interim government, Salahuddin said all 133 ordinances were constitutionally required to be placed in parliament on the first day of the session.

"They will be placed. Which ones will be accepted and which ones will not -- that will be decided through parliamentary discussion," he added.