

Pro-BNP transport workers' leader murdered in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A pro-BNP transport workers' leader was shot dead by unidentified criminals in Khulna city on Wednesday night.

Deceased Masum Billah, 55, was the former president of Rupsha upazila unit of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and former president of the Rupsha-Bagerhat inter-district road transport workers' union.

He hailed from Bagmara village in Rupsha upazila.

Quoting witnesses, police said Masum was standing near Dakbangla intersection in the city around 9:00pm when a group of people opened fire on him. They also stabbed him.

Injured Masum was taken to the Khulna Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead, said police.

Mohammad Tazul Islam, deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, said traffic police, with the help of locals, detained a suspect while he was fleeing the scene.

Six to seven attackers were involved in the killing, he said.



A plume of smoke rises over buildings in Doha after a drone strike; mourners in the city of Kerman attend the funeral of those killed in the US-Israeli war with Iran; and protesters carry placards reading "Hands off Iran!" as they march toward the US embassy during a rally condemning the US and Israeli attacks on Iran in Seoul. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP



War rages on as senate backs Trump

FROM PAGE 1

The war has touched as far afield as the Sri Lankan coast, where a US submarine torpedoed an Iranian warship, and Azerbaijan, which threatened retaliation after a drone hit an airport.

Azerbaijan warned the attack "will not go unanswered" and vowed "necessary retaliatory measures," raising fears of another country entering the fray. Iran denied it launched the drone attack.

In Lebanon, AFP TV images showed buildings in rubble and plumes of black smoke over Beirut after Israeli strikes aimed at Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah.

On another front, Tehran said it had hit Iraq-based Kurdish groups, as the United States reportedly seeks to arm Iranian Kurdish groups to infiltrate Iran.

An Iranian drone struck an arms depot in the headquarters of the group in the town of Dekala in Iraq's Kurdistan region, killing at least one fighter, security sources said.

Sources said the Kurdish group has been training to mount an attack in Iran in hopes of weakening the country's military. The goal would be to create room for Iranians opposed to the Islamic regime to rise up now that Khamenei and other top officials have been killed.

The groups have requested US military support and Iraqi leaders in Erbil and Baghdad have also been in touch with the Trump administration in recent days, they said.

The forces are in talks with the United States about CIA help to provide weapons, two of the sources said.

CNN was the first to report on the CIA's involvement with the groups and the potential ground operation. Axios said this week that Trump held a telephone call with two of Iraqi Kurdistan's top leaders.

Yesterday, Nechirvan Barzani, president of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, said it "must not become part of any conflict or military escalation that harms the lives and security of our fellow citizens".

Iran's military yesterday also claimed an attack on a base hosting US troops in Erbil in northern Iraq using drones, and causing "significant damage".

Meanwhile, Australia deployed two military aircraft to the theatre while Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said he could not rule out his armed forces taking part in hostilities.

The United Kingdom yesterday said it will send helicopters with anti-

drone capabilities to Cyprus. Britain is also deploying HMS Dragon to the eastern Mediterranean, as well as four additional Typhoon fighter jets to Qatar.

Earlier, Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto told parliament that Italy, Spain, France and the Netherlands are sending naval assets to Cyprus to protect the island in the coming days.

The war has also dragged in Nato member Turkey after alliance air defences destroyed a missile launched from Iran heading towards Turkish airspace.

While a Turkish official said the missile appeared to have been aimed at a British base in Cyprus, Turkey summoned the Iranian ambassador over the incident.

Meanwhile, the European Union and the Gulf nations yesterday issued a joint statement urging "dialogue and diplomacy" to resolve the ongoing war.

"The ministers reiterated their commitment to regional stability and called for protection of civilians and full respect of international law," said the EU and GCC, following a videoconference of European and Gulf foreign ministers.

"The ministers reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to dialogue and diplomacy as means to resolve the crisis," they said, adding that they agreed on "joint diplomatic efforts to bring about a lasting solution" to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and "ultimately allow the Iranian people to determine their future".

Amid the fear of long-term turmoil, Hamish Falconer, the UK's minister for the Middle East, told parliament that it was possible the Iran crisis could continue for months.

"The situation is evolving, but there are indications that this is a crisis, not of days, but of weeks and possibly months," he said.

Following yesterday's strikes on Tehran, AFP TV images showed blackened vehicles and mangled buildings, with smoke still rising from some.

Iran's official IRNA news agency said 1,045 military personnel and civilians have been killed since the war began, a toll AFP could not independently verify.

Iranian media yesterday reported that a sports complex, football stadium, municipality building and shop fronts across Tehran were damaged in Israeli and US strikes on the city.

The country is effectively cut off from the rest of the world, with the

internet operating at around one percent of capacity, according to the Netblocks monitor.

Israel's war aims were to "inflict severe damage on the Iranian terror regime until it removes the existential threat", military spokesman Brigadier General Effie Defrin said in a televised briefing.

Defence Minister Israel Katz said his US counterpart Pete Hegseth had assured him of Washington's firm backing for their joint military campaign against Iran and urged him to continue the operation "to the end".

Israel's military said its air force had hit and disabled more than 300 ballistic missile launchers in Iran since the war began.

AFP reporters in Jerusalem heard explosions following warnings of incoming Iranian missile fire, but residents were quickly cleared to leave their shelters.

Across the border in Lebanon, Israel said its forces had hit "several command centres belonging to the Hezbollah terrorist organisation" in south Beirut.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said a separate pre-dawn Israeli drone strike hit an apartment in Beddawi, a Palestinian refugee camp near Tripoli, killing senior Hamas official Wassim Attallah al-Ali and his wife.

Lebanese authorities said at least 102 people had been killed, 437 wounded, and 83,000 displaced from their homes since Monday.

The war could usher in a "prolonged period of flux" for the global economy, warned International Monetary Fund chief Kristalina Georgieva.

Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards have claimed the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf chokepoint through which a fifth of the world's crude oil flows, with oil tanker transits down 90 percent, according to market intelligence firm Kpler.

The conflict has not spared the rich Gulf monarchies, usually seen as a safe haven in a volatile region, as Iran has lashed out at cities and energy infrastructure.

Thirteen people, seven of them civilians, have been killed in countries around the Gulf since the war began, including an 11-year-old girl in Kuwait.

Qatar yesterday said it intercepted 14 ballistic missiles and four drones as loud blasts reverberated across Doha. It had earlier evacuated residents living near the US embassy in Doha, after thwarting attacks on Hamad International Airport.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1

She had long suffered from multiple health complications, including heart, liver, and kidney problems, diabetes, lung issues, arthritis, and eye-related illnesses.

Khaleda was the first female prime minister of Bangladesh. She assumed office through a popular vote in the 1991 national election and played a key role in introducing the parliamentary form of government.

Maherin Chowdhury, a teacher and coordinator at the Diabari campus of Milestone College, has also been awarded posthumously in social service and public service category for her heroic actions.

She died after sustaining 100 percent burns while rescuing at least 20 students when a Bangladesh Air Force F-7 fighter jet crashed into the primary section of Milestone School and College on July 21 last year. She succumbed to her injuries at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery later that day.

Talking to The Daily Star, her husband Monsur Helal said the honour reflects the respect and love of the entire nation.

"As human beings, many of us might wish we could take such a brave step in that moment. She was able to do it, and the nation has given her this recognition for that."

Helal added, "This honour actually belongs to all 180 million people of Bangladesh. I believe it was a heartfelt wish of the nation, and perhaps that wish has now been fulfilled."

Other individual recipients include Major Mohammad Abdul Jalil (posthumous) for his role in the Liberation War, Professor Zahurul Karim for contributions to science and technology, Dr Ashraf Siddiqui (posthumous) in literature, Hanif Sanket (AKM Hanif) and Bashir Ahmed (posthumous) in culture, and Jobera Rahman (Linu) in sports.

In rural development, the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has been selected.

Several others will be honoured in social service and public service, including Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury (posthumous), Md Saidul Haque, SOS Children's Village International in Bangladesh, and Gonoshasthaya Kendra, Kazi Fazlur Rahman (posthumous) has been selected for contributions to public administration.

In the field of research and training, Mohammad Abdul Baki, Prof MA Rahim, and Prof Sukomal Barua have been named recipients. Abdul Mukit Majumder (Mukit Majumder Babu) will receive the award for environment conservation.

Faujdarhat Cadet College has been honoured for its role in the Liberation War.

Women sidelined

FROM PAGE 1

as partners in change," she said, calling for an end to the "good girl" stereotype that stifles political ambition.

Supporting this, Nayab Yusuf Ahmed, the BNP candidate who won from Faridpur-3, highlighted how marginalised women are denied basic rights, with their vulnerabilities "exploited to confine them within the home".

Tasnim Jara, who contested independently from Dhaka-9, exposed the political machinery that treats women as tokens, not decision-makers.

She noted that while women drive grassroots campaigning, "male-dominated structures" systematically block them during the nomination stage.

She also critiqued the reserved seat system, arguing it renders women "more accountable to party leadership than to voters."

Leader of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist) Sima Dutta said that women are often treated as third-class citizens across sectors, from agriculture to garments.

She called for equal pay, legal recognition of women in the informal sector and stronger government action against discriminatory attitudes.

The dialogue also highlighted a chilling rise in violence against women.

Morium Nessa, Lead for Women's Rights at ActionAid, presented data showing a 52.3 percent increase in reported rape cases in 2025 compared to 2024.

In January 2026 alone, 272 cases of violence against women and girls were reported.

Furthermore, the dialogue revealed a massive institutional failure: 39 percent of the country's universities still lack sexual harassment prevention committees.

ActionAid Country Director Farah

Writ petition challenges Ahsan H Mansur's removal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed yesterday with the High Court challenging the legality of the government's decision to remove Ahsan H Mansur from the post of Bangladesh Bank governor and appoint Md Mostaqur Rahman in his place.

Supreme Court lawyer Abdullah Al Mamun submitted the petition as a public interest litigation. The petition also seeks a stay on the government order that ended Ahsan H Mansur's tenure and installed Mostaqur Rahman as the new head of the central bank.

The government's decision violated the relevant provisions of the Bangladesh Bank Order, 1972, said Sarwar Hossain, counsel for the petitioner.

According to the law, a BB governor cannot be removed from office unless they are found to be incapable or incompetent.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Govt appeals not to panic-buy fuel

FROM PAGE 1

"It's happening everywhere across the country. Earlier, if a vehicle usually took 10 litres, now it is filling the tank. Even motorcycles that normally buy very small amounts are filling up," he said.

If this panic buying continues, the fuel stock could be exhausted in 10

days even if the government maintains there is fuel stock for one month.

The fuel supply remained normal until noon yesterday.

"After that, we received instructions that supply would be reduced by about 10 percent, compared with the amount sold during March-May last year," he said.

The country currently has 15 days' stock of petrol and 30 days' octane, while diesel reserves stand at about 12 days, according to officials at the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

As of the latest data, the country has around 37,000 tonnes of petrol and 53,000 tonnes of octane in stock.

Besides, there are local condensate sources for producing such fuel oils.

Though diesel stock is now at around 180,000 tonnes in the depots, two consignments of diesel have already anchored the port, which contains another 57,000 tonnes combined, the BPC officials said.

Usually, the average daily diesel

within the party and the government. TIB reiterated its demand to abolish Rab and called for investigations and exemplary punishment over allegations of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, corruption and abuse of power.

It also sought repeal of the Police Commission Ordinance 2025, saying it failed to meet expectations, and called for a new law to establish an independent police commission through stakeholder consultations.

It sought reforms to intelligence agencies, including the DGF, SB, DB and NSI, and urged the government to form the Information Commission without delay.

TIB's recommendations also included a national anti-corruption strategy assigning responsibilities across state institutions, regulators, the public and private sectors, and the media, along with an ombudsman mechanism to monitor compliance and implementation.

It called for a code of conduct for the members of parliament and other public representatives to prevent the abuse of power, extortion, grabbing and partisan misuse of office.

The other proposals included a permanent legal end to black money whitening, a conflict-of-interest legal framework for public decision-makers and Bangladesh joining the Common Reporting Standard for the automatic exchange of financial account information.

TIB also recommended stopping government employees from taking part, directly or indirectly, in any political activities.