

## 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 Kerma 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



## Trump backs Kurds for Iran offensive

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hopes of weakening the country's military.

The forces are in talks with the United States about CIA help to provide weapons, they added.

Tehran yesterday carried out a drone strike on the headquarters of Iraq-based Kurdish groups, killing one.

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

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

Trump also signalled confidence that the major shipping route near Iran, the Strait of Hormuz, will remain open.

Closing the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow chokepoint between Iran and Oman through which a fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas passes, has been one of Iran's main objectives, and shipping through the crucial energy artery has ground to a near halt after Iranian hits on six vessels.

"They have no navy, you know, the navy is now at the bottom of the sea," Trump said. "I'm watching Hormuz very closely."

Araghchi yesterday said that the Islamic republic was neither asking for a ceasefire nor negotiations with the US, adding that Iran had no plans to close the Strait of Hormuz for now.

Meanwhile, the US Senate backed Trump's military campaign against Iran. The US Senate voted 53 to 47 not to advance the bipartisan resolution aimed at stopping the war, largely along party lines.

The House was expected to vote on a similar Iran war powers resolution later yesterday. Even if a resolution were to pass both the Senate and House, it would not go into effect unless it could garner two-thirds majorities in both chambers to survive an expected Trump veto.

The war has touched as far afield as the Sri Lankan coast, where a US submarine torpedoed an Iranian warship, killing at least 87 sailors, and Azerbaijan, which threatened retaliation after a drone hit an airport.

Iran denied it launched the drone attack on Azerbaijan.

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.

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

The United Kingdom 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 Nato air defences destroyed a missile launched from Iran heading towards Turkish airspace.

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.

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 on Saturday, 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 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.

Hamish Falconer, the UK's minister for the Middle East, told parliament that it was possible the Iran crisis could continue for months.

Meanwhile, 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 Atallah al-Ali and his wife.

Lebanese authorities said at least 102 people had been killed, 437 wounded, and tens of thousands 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.

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.

Falling debris from an intercepted drone also injured six people in the Emirati capital Abu Dhabi, officials said.

Riyadh also said it intercepted Iranian missiles and drones yesterday.

Meanwhile, Russia's Foreign Ministry yesterday accused the US and Israel of "trying to drag" Arab nations into war with their strikes on Iran. The ministry said the only path to stabilisation was to stop the attacks on Iran, but there were no signs for now of this happening.

## Khaleda among 15

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health complications, including liver cirrhosis.

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 the 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 Siddiqi (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.

Zafrullah Chowdhury received the award once in 1977, the year it was first introduced, and since then no one has ever been honoured twice.

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

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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.

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## Govt urges saving fuel as LNG import cost doubles

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to adopt strict energy-saving practices, including limiting lighting and setting air conditioners at 25 degrees Celsius or higher.

The directives also urged households, institutions and businesses to conserve natural gas and fuel oil by avoiding unnecessary use, preventing gas leakages and encouraging the use of public transport and carpooling to reduce fuel consumption.

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman also instructed the ministers and secretaries to practice austerity in the use of electricity and fuel.

He asked cabinet members and secretaries who live in the same residential buildings to consider using shared transport when commuting to and from the Secretariat, as part of broader efforts to reduce fuel consumption.

The meeting happened in reduced lighting, as part of the government's austerity drives to conserve electricity and energy.

The Daily Star visited two separate cabinet members after the meeting and found both working by using daylight through open curtains and having their air conditioning systems



Queue of vehicles trying to buy fuel at a filling station near Asad Gate yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

set to 25 degrees Celsius.

And yet, fears of a possible fuel shortage triggered panic buying in Dhaka yesterday, with long queues of private cars and motorcycles seen at petrol pumps across the capital.

At several stations, the lines of vehicles stretched beyond the pump premises onto nearby roads, causing traffic congestion and requiring additional traffic police intervention.

The pressure on pumps has more than doubled in recent days, said Mohammad Nazmul Haque, president

of the Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association.

"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."

If this panic buying continues, the fuel stock could be exhausted in 10 days even if the government maintains enough to last a month normally.

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 added.

Meanwhile, bottled liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) importers yesterday met with Tuku at his office and informed him that they were facing difficulties importing LPG, including problems in opening letters of credit.

A cargo containing 10,000 tonnes of LPG had halted its journey near Sri Lanka after a ship was attacked in the area, they said.

Another cargo carrying 35,000 tonnes of LPG was on its way, which may help achieve the target of importing 150,000 tonnes of LPG in March.

However, shipping costs have nearly doubled compared with the usual rates.

Subsequently, they urged the ministry to increase LPG prices.

In response, Tuku said the matter would be considered by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission but urged businesses not to increase prices on their own.